Patterns

Twenty-eighth Edition

Cover Design

UNTITLED
Pam Ridner

The 28th Edition
of

PATTERNS

A Publication of
St. Clair County Community College
Port Huron, Michigan

PREFACE

In 1966, well-known author and editor Norman Cousins, in an article entitled "The Computer and the Poet," discussed the importance of the arts in an age more and more programmed by high technology:

> *The essential problem of man in a computerized age remains the same as it has always been. The problem is not solely how to be more productive, more content, but how to be more sensitive, more sensible, more proportionate, more alive.... The question persists and indeed grows whether the computer will make it easier or harder for human beings to know who they really are, to identify their real problems, to respond more fully to beauty, to place adequate value on life... .*

Twenty years later we find artistic patterns of human expression still confronting the same "essential problem" -- that age-old, universal problem of "Who am I?" and "What is my purpose, the pattern for living my life?"

In 1986, SCCCC students of all ages and interests, through their writing and art, examine and explore the conditions of being human in a rapidly changing, often confusing, complex world. The arts have always reflected the ages in which the artists and authors have lived; the present age is no exception. This edition of **Patterns** once again shows us all in our growing up, in our living and working and playing, in our doubts and delights, in our fears and anxieties, in our frustrations and deliberations.

The arts are not extra frills or mere niceties, but rather they are the staff of living, giving substance and value to the individual and to society; they are the meaning-filled necessities of life.

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DEDICATION

Most people, if asked, remember a favorite teacher, someone who made a difference in their lives. They can recall incidents that left strong impressions, lessons that still influence them, or words that often echo with wit and wisdom, honesty and humor, appreciation and approval, or a sincere concern for students who did not always put forth the effort needed to learn. With this edition we honor one of the instructors at St. Clair County Community College who, for many students, has proved to be a favorite teacher.

Marge Boal has taught at the college for 20 years. Two years ago she was honored by her colleagues by being elected to receive the Distinguished Teacher Award. While at the college she has taught, in addition to the freshman composition classes, courses in the short story, American literature, modern poetry, and creative writing, and is acknowledged by her peers as a master teacher. She has served the English department as its chairperson and has participated effectively on many college and community activities.

Her concern for others is well-shown by her work on Love, Inc., for St. Vincent de Paul's Society, and especially for the Blue Water Rice Bowl Food Depot. For the latter, she brought college and community together through spearheading college food drives for the community food depot. Marge works quietly and professionally, preferring that the spotlight of interest be focused on the class, the activity, or the need being addressed. In this way she has prepared booklets and a slide-show presentation to promote awareness of community needs and services.

Her concern for students is evident in her method of clear, careful classroom presentation of material and in her close working with students on their writing during individual conferences in her office. She demands that they each do their best and encourages them to develop their own skills and not to compare themselves with others. She is patient and persistent with each student; her belief in their abilities instills confidence in her students to achieve. Her philosophy clearly represents the best of the total community college open-door concept: recognize the student's level and help to bring that level up to collegiate standards to ensure the student's individual success in any chosen field. She firmly believes that success will depend upon a good command of the English language.

Just as we all have favorite teachers, teachers also have special classes that become memorable. One of Ms. Boal's special classes last year was Creative Writing. Students brought both wit and wisdom, honesty and humor to their discussions. They showed concern for others and for good writing as they critically commented on one another's work, not to find fault but to help each author improve in writing. As the semester progressed, these students formed a community of writers, each person contributing to and benefiting from the group -- unified by their desire to write well, individually developing their own strengths and shaping their own styles. In this edition of **Patterns**, several of these students, Alissa Francisco, Scott Klein, Roberta Lueth, and Ross Starkey, are represented, and the first and second place honors for poetry and short story are awarded to writing done for this class.

Because of Marge Boal's dedication to many students over the past 20 years and her work in creative writing, we fondly dedicate this edition to her on behalf of all the students who have found her to be a special person, a favorite teacher.

"I touch the future; I teach." -- Christa McAuliffe

CHRISTA McAULIFFE

by Roberta Lueth

1985 Recipient of the
Eleanor B. Mathews Writing Award

As we leave a trail of billowing white
In the crystal brilliance of this fair blue day,
Above the ocean's deeper blue expanse,
Our way is flame and roar,
Rolling, careening height.

My soul exalted by the magic flight,
Thinking even now of all that I will say,
I give no thought to death.

We thrust away from earth,
Rise, lift into the unfolding bright future,
A prolonged, ascending thunder.

High on my hopes, I hold my breath.
It seems forever we are climbing,
A silent, rending sigh.

Ten miles below my children watch
In wonder and awe
As all our cherished dreams explode
Across the cruel and scattering sky.

NOTE: One of the most significant events of the past year was the nationally televised visual impact of the explosive destruction of dreams and the stunning realization we gained of the limitations of both our imperfect technology and our fragile humanity. We learned once more the need to question the truth of ourselves and our expectations and to value more highly the beauty found in human relationships. As a special tribute to Christa McAuliffe, and through her to teachers and their students everywhere, we present this poem by Ms. Lueth.

THE ELEANOR B. MATHEWS WRITING AWARD

Roberta Lueth is the recipient of the Eleanor B. Mathews Writing Award for the second year in a row and, in receiving this honor, establishes another record in the history of **Patterns**. Last year when she received this award, she was also the first person who had submitted and had work published in all four writing categories. In addition, she took both first and second place honors in poetry, first place honors in the literary essay, and second place honors in the short story. This year Ms. Lueth again submitted work in all four writing categories, and this time she has taken all four first place honors as well as tying for second place honors in the short story. Since entries are numbered, the authors' identities are not known until the judging has been completed. The judges for **Patterns** are pleased to present the fourth annual Eleanor B. Mathews Writing Award to Roberta Lueth.

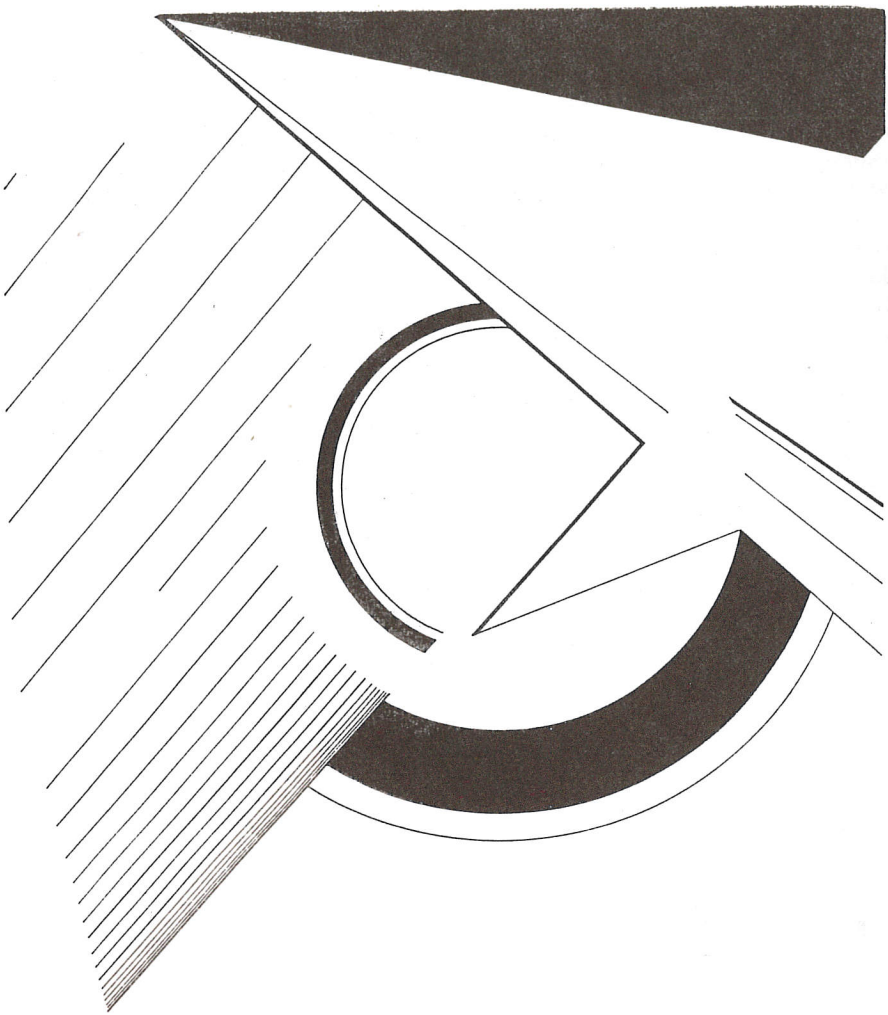
The award was established in 1983 by the family and friends of Mrs. Mathews, a former well-loved teacher of English at SCCCC. She taught creative writing at the college and, after her retirement, at the Senior Citizens Center. Her own poetry was widely published, and she also devoted hours to reading books on tape for use by the blind. The writing award was established to recognize and encourage excellence in student writing.

> The monetary award is to be given to the student who, in the estimation of the English faculty, has submitted an entry to the annual **Patterns**' competition, which exhibits outstanding creativity, technical skill, and individual style. The cash award may be divided among more than one recipient.

Eleanor Mathews enjoyed teaching the ideal student who, as she defined the term, is "a person who wants to learn because he knows that anything he learns is going to apply in life and as a result of that he is naturally going to study." The recipients of the Eleanor B. Mathews Writing Award have each exemplified her definition. The following students have received this award:

Steven W. Strobbe, Port Huron..... 1983
Mary Joann Hayes, Richmond..... 1984
Roberta Lueth, St. Clair..... 1985
Roberta Lueth, St. Clair..... 1986

Ms. Lueth lives in St. Clair with her husband Roy, daughters Liz and Krista, and son Chris, where creativity is evident in their home. She has also won awards for her quilting. Ms. Lueth has studied creative writing under both Richard Colwell and Marge Boal, concentrating in those classes on the short story and poetry. In courses in the modern novel and contemporary short story taken with Don Haines, she has worked on her writing of literary essays, while in an advanced composition class with Susanna Defever, she polished the writing of personal essays. Her love of language and her insistence on correct usage are obvious in carefully written papers, each one revised and reworked until it meets her own high standards. She has also been interested in helping other students to develop their writing abilities, often taking time after a class to discuss papers with fellow students. She is well-liked, and her opinions are valued because she tries to help others develop their own best techniques. Her writing shows versatility in subjects and style; she enjoys the challenge that writing gives and the variety of forms available to the writer. In a journal entry for one class, she gave her definition of effective writing as "ageless: first find your own voice, then learn how to sing. A sophomore course in writing should be a journey into self-discovery -- our best gift to others is ourselves." A single line, however, that she penned later seems to sum up her philosophy of writing best: "And I have bruised myself upon the smile of God...".



LINE
Pheth Sayavong

CIRCLES WITHIN CIRCLES, WORLDS WITHIN WORLDS

First Place Honors

by Roberta Lueth

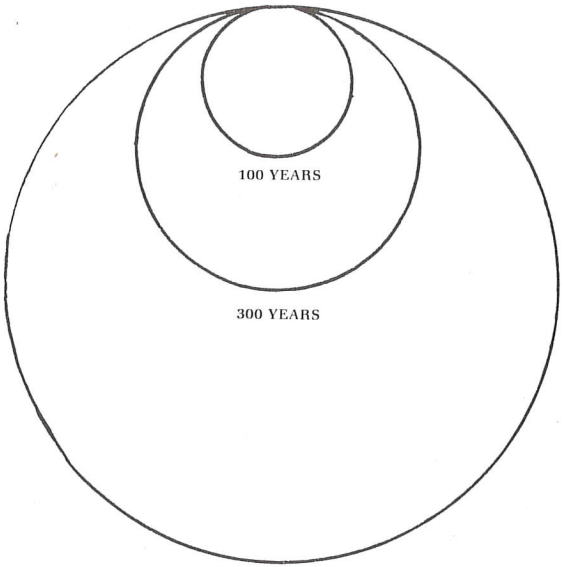
Gabriel Garcia Marquez sat on the log at the edge of a clearing on the rim of what appeared to be an endless swampy jungle. "Shall we go for a short walk?" he had asked earlier, as we rested on the veranda, sipping our cold drinks in the oppressive heat of the Colombian summer. "Come," he said. "I have something to show you. Perhaps our worlds are not so different after all." We had been discussing politics and philosophies all through the long lunch but had found no point on which we could agree. We seemed worlds apart; what could he possibly show me that would change that?

It seemed a short enough walk, as he had promised, out across the sloping lawn and into the trees down to where the river meandered off into the swamp; but now, as we sit at the edge of the clearing beyond the river, I realize I have no idea which way we have come, nor what time it is. I know it has to be somewhere between three in the afternoon and sunset, but time here seems to have stopped. Overhead the sky is darkening, but the clearing is bathed in light, a jungle radiance, filled with exotic flowers and the cries of birds for which I know no name, can imagine no shape, no color.

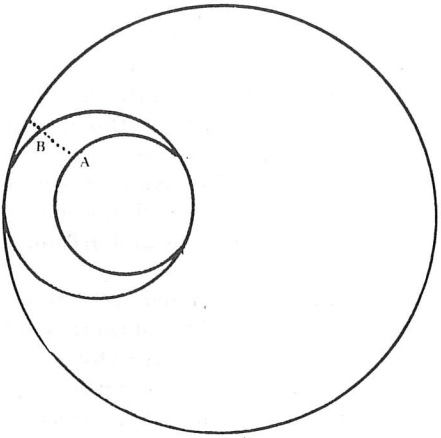
"Let me tell you a story," he begins, picking up the walking stick he had placed at his side while we sat and rested. He leaned forward, looking out towards the deepest part of the jungle. "Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice." (11) His voice is soft and dreamlike. He continues, leisurely describing a place called Macondo set on the banks of a river in some earlier time, some other place. I want to interrupt, to ask where? and when? but he is looking away, talking of gypsies. The names roll off his tongue - Buendia, Macondo, Melquiades - this is no land I know of. As he speaks, he is drawing circles in the dirt in front of his feet, seemingly aimless circles, rings within rings.

"The children would remember for the rest of their lives..." he goes on and I realize I have been lulled half asleep by his voice, by the weaving in and out of time, by the movements of his walking stick. "The earth is round, like an orange," he says (14), drawing a large circle in front of him. His stick moves as his voice continues, but I am lost again. He moves easily from past to future, as though there is no distance between them. Melquiades arrives, then leaves, then comes again. He has aged. He goes and returns a youthful man, transformed by the miracle of false teeth. I look down from my contemplation of the endless swamp to see Marquez rolling a small circle along the inner rim of the other, larger circle, first one way, then the other. Ahead, then back.

"When the pirate Sir Francis Drake attacked Riohacha in the sixteenth century, Ursula Iguaran's great-great-grandmother became so frightened..." (27) As his voice floats in the otherwise silent clearing, I look at what he has drawn. The little circle within the large one now has a medium-sized companion, and as he speaks of Riohacha and the three hundred years of Ursula's family history, I realize this middle circle represents the generations gone by before Ursula and Jose Arcadio have come to Macondo. Macondo, then, must be the smallest circle.



The Spanish galleon he is speaking of lies on the rim of the three hundred year circle - "here," he says. "And Macondo at the time Jose Arcadio set out is here." In between is the swamp, this jungle where men feel "overwhelmed by their most ancient memories." (20) Beyond it, weeks away, is the orchid-adorned galleon, beyond that, the sea. And, of course, all the wonders of the outside world, the treasures and discoveries of the past brought to Macondo by the endless round of gypsies, ride on the unbroken line of the outer circle. I stare at the circles and listen, beginning to understand, to glimpse the larger design of his story.



A. Macondo
B. Spanish galleon
C. Outside world, the sea

Now he is telling the story of the capon and I see it is meant to be a joke, a repetitious circle within a story beset with circles and repetitions. He smiles as he describes the unending joke, the narrator and audience in compliance, trying to escape the plague of insomnia. "After all," he says, reassuring me with his look, "we are not that far from where we began."

The day does not change around us, time has stopped. He repeats names; children are named for their fathers, for their grandfathers; the characters move in circles within his story; the two inner circles on the ground roll in opposite directions. Fernanda appears, out of the past, out of Riohacha or beyond. She disappears and Aureliano Segundo must search for her, but the circles have kept moving, the distance is now great, he becomes "lost in misty byways, in times reserved for oblivion." "After sterile weeks he came to an unknown city..." (197) Marquez draws the line with his stick. "From here," he says, "across to here. You see how simple it is?"

It is darker now, but there are no stars. I look at the starless sky and am reminded of Jose Arcadio discovering the world was round. He took his bearings from the objects in the sky, but instead of discovering outer space, he discovered inner. There is no world outside the outer circle, the line is endless with no beginning and no end, like the poetry of Aureliano.

"...Remedios the Beauty waving good-bye in the midst of the flapping sheets that rose up with her..." (223) I am not amazed. Immersed in a world that contains the wonders of flying carpets and false teeth, how can I be surprised? I am out of my element, the natural feels unnatural, and I am lost with no touchstone of time or familiar place to guide me. I can only listen and follow more deeply into the jungle, into his voice, now talking of ghosts. I notice that no one escapes this world, even the ghosts are not free, but return again and again. Melquiades dies and leaves behind his scrolls; another takes

up his place in the solitary room, it is as it was before. One comes, another goes, the outside world presses in on Macondo, war starts up, is over, begins again. I am aware of a sense of purpose, of direction, to the story and I am not surprised when I hear Marquez say in Ursula's voice, "time was not passing, as she had just admitted, but that it was turning in a circle." (310) I have seen, have felt the solitude of this place, have become caught up in the dream, in the ancient memories, in the endless repetitions. I am sitting at the edge of the swamp that leads to Macondo and time has stopped, as I listen, first to the words of Ursula, then to Pilar, who has learned "that the history of the family (is) a machine with unavoidable repetitions, a turning wheel that would (go) on spilling into eternity were it not for the progressive and irremediable wearing of the axle." (364)

Marquez continues talking, things are drawing to a close, the circles are turning faster and faster, it is hard to see the blurred edges of their revolving rims. Within the clearing the wind begins to rise. The circles stop.

"And so, you see," he says, "the city of mirrors (or mirages) would be wiped out by the wind," and here the wind whirled through the dust, erasing the circles from in front of him. He stood up slowly and walked to an opening in the wall of the jungle I had failed to notice, though I had looked for it. He continued speaking to me over his shoulder; "races condemned to one hundred years of solitude do not have a second opportunity on earth." (383) I understood what he had meant as clearly as if I had lived it. I had indeed been lost inside those worlds, those circles, captured both by the wonder of his story and the magic of its telling.

He turned and disappeared out of the clearing and I hurried to follow. Looking back into the jungle from beyond the river, I could see the trees being whipped by the wind which, having destroyed Macondo, was fighting its way up the sloping lawn to where we stood.

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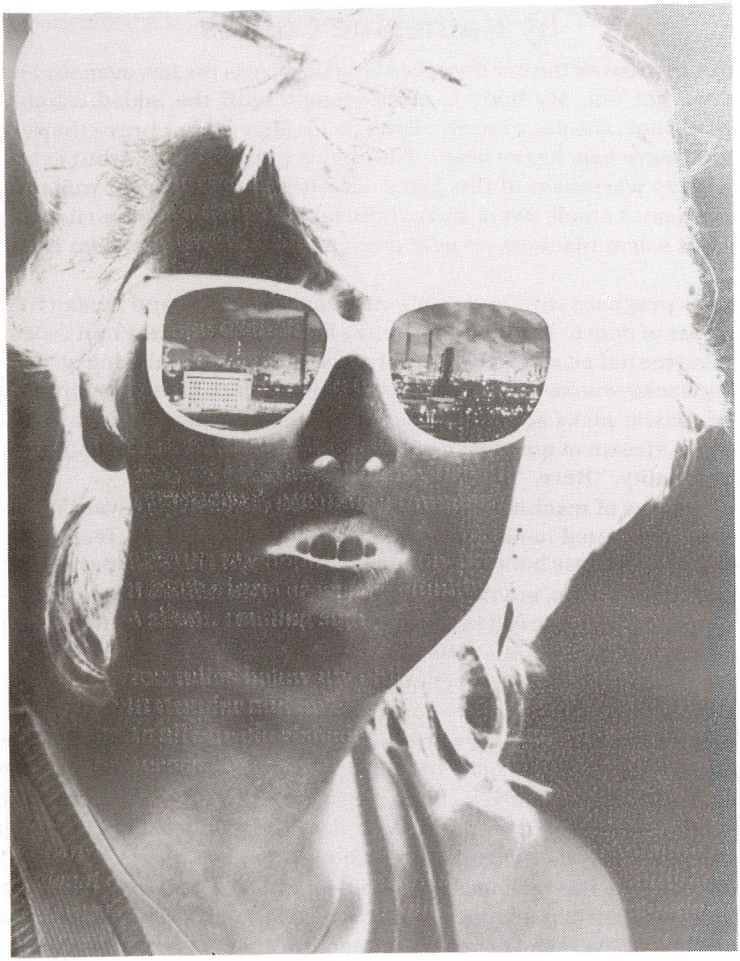


UNTITLED
Walter L. Cooper

THE PARADOX OF DETERGENT AND KOOL-AID SMILES

by Katherine Collins

Shakily I maneuver the car door, backing up across the ice, ever so carefully. I park and we get out. My body is cumbersome with the added weight of the garbage bag. Click, the door barely closes. With fairy steps I brave the rest of the parking lot. Heavy bag, heavy heart. The cold is uncomfortable, but even more I dread the fuzzy warmness of this place. Laurie gets the door for me; we plod in towards the heat. A smell, sweet and comfortable, reaches my nostrils: a personal scent, that of warm blankets on cold days; a scent of heaven when home is far away.

Moving as pregnant women in cement galoshes, Laurie and I make it through the second set of doors. The machines buzz loudly in my ears. Fluorescent lights blind, leaving me naked and irritated. Screaming children, chirping birds, and the maddening wacka-wacka of Pac-Man all battle for a place in my thoughts. Lugging our lumpy plastic sacks across blackened floors, we move further and further into its fury. A stream of quarters dropped on formica shakes me back into a cold hair-raising reality. "Here," Laurie mutters. I drop my bag.

An endless row of machines, monsters with gaping mouths, wanting, longing, face us. Metallic slotted hands reach for me. I just stand there, feeling helpless. Laurie begins to separate her colors and her whites. I watch her, marvelling in her ability to get the job done, envious of the way she casually ignores her unpleasant surroundings. With a hand full of thumbs I help her. I am scolded for not knowing my primaries. "Sit down," she tells me.

I slither down and hide in a yellow plastic chair. In my eyes, this room is a monstrosity. Dirty whites, muddy avocados, and angry yellows all fight for a place in the confining room. Shelves are littered with bird cages sporting scruffy avians, angry avians. A myna bird cocks his head and trills. Taped up dirty Habitrails twine oddly about the shelves, long passageways going nowhere. A hostile hamster peers anxiously from its soiled cedar chips. I close my eyes and inhale deeply. The smell is the only good thing about this place.

"Could you put the quarters in?" Laurie asks. I open my eyes to see her pushing a misshapen cart around a bunch of grimy-faced children. I start to push silver into the outstretched arms of the machine. Laurie pours powder into the heads of these monsters. I sit back down to watch their gaping mouths churning with soapy saliva, churning, chomping, and sucking happily on my friend's possessions.

This place is littered with plants. Long and spiny, they snake in and out of the ceiling, curving and crawling out of faded Faygo bottles. Dusty leaves and dry

crumpled bits lie scattered on the dingy floor, the newest victims of the children's games.

Four of them run around in an idiot circle. The machines with their mouths full ignore them. The children's mothers ignore them too. They are stoop-shouldered somber women, smoking and swearing as they fold tiny faded garments into small bundles.

The caged animals and caged children are dealing with their confinement as noisily as possible. Playing the Indy 500, the kids run heedlessly, yelling at the top of their voices. "Bang, Bang, Bang, you're dead," the littlest one shouts. This child has an especially irritating face, dirty freckles and a Kool-aid smile. "I ain't gonna bring youse kids here, any more," squawks their mother. "I told yas ten damn times to stop runnin' around," she yells across the room. The munchkins stop long enough at the Pac-Man machine to break the player's concentration. Satisfied by their mischief, they start circling again at top speed. Their mother expertly lights a cigarette and goes back to talking.

On his third lap, the smallest trips over a chair and falls flat. The sound from that cherry-stained mouth is chilling. Laurie looks at me and rolls her eyes. I contemplate making a sacrifice to the great god of clean. The monsters seem too busy chewing to care about this stray urchin. In my fantasies, I see his grimy face bobbing up and down in the glass windows.

I had brought my sketch book along in hopes of getting a few nice drawings, but I glance disdainfully at it sitting upon the worn-out counter. I can't get that child's face out of my mind. This overwhelming atmosphere is controlling everything. My body feels numb. We are all caged. This place screams for birth control, for freedom. The owners have tried with the flora and fauna to make it bearable. All of this leads it to being even more claustrophic.

Someone mutters that the damn machine ate their socks. I ask Laurie if we're dry yet, for the forty-seventh time. The children keep racing; Pac-Man keeps munching, and the soapy spit still runs from the angry jaws of the machines. This place will always be a nightmare, a constant.

We finally escape into the cold night air, clutching the still-warm bags of clothing to our chests. Laurie and I remain silent most of the way home. As the heater warms the car, we become more fluent. "Now, aren't you sorry you came with me?" a serious Laurie asks.

"I think everyone should be subjected to that every now and then," I answer. "If anything will bring you down to earth, that will," I add. "I'll tell you one thing, though; when I move out, I'll *live* in a washer and dryer before I'll go to a laundromat every week," I say exasperated.

That sweet clean smell permeates the bags and hits my nostrils. Laurie and I begin to giggle.

WHEN AND ONCE
by Scott A. Klein

When we owned bicycles and hot July days bubbled
tar sealing cracks in the streets we rode down,
And I was a young boy and humid July lifetimes
were spent by lukewarm, lizard filled streams—
Once we caught crawdads and built forts with
fallen tree limb logs tied with clumps of grass.

When we crushed white stones and pretended it
was gun powder that we used to derail trains,
And we were Tom and Huck building our raft
which sank several feet from shore —
Once we were travelling vagabonds setting
out to see the world all in a day.
When we were young, each hot, humid July day
was transformed into a complete lifetime.

When we owned bicycles the days in July turned
slow like a windmill in a light breeze,
And I was a young boy playing on a clay field
baked into pottery by the summer sun —
Once we were young boys racing our bikes down
to the creek to catch us a mess of catfish.

When we rode down a dusty path past elephant
grass and cattails growing in dried mud,
And we rigged worms to a hook and set our
bamboo poles against a birch tree there —
Once we walked upstream knowing we'd catch
no fish that day or any other day.
And we'd sacrifice our shorts to the scorching
summer sun at the swimming hole nearby.

And then there was the young girl who lived
in the yellow house a bike ride away —
Once, she was a strange creature that didn't
catch crawdads, make gun powder, build forts
(When I thought, "what a strange way to be
dressed in ruffles, lace and lipstick").

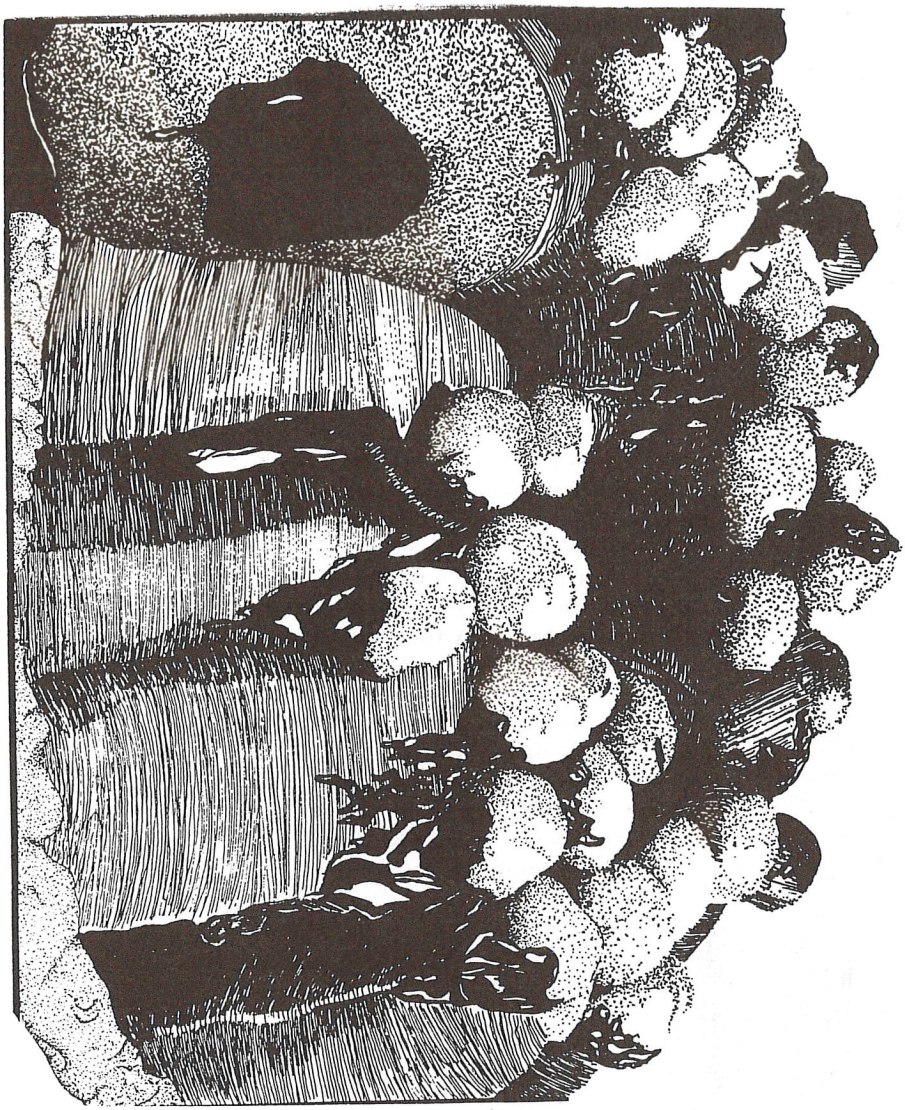
And she lived in a strange world of dolls
and hopscotch patterns chalked on sidewalks —
Once, I was held prisoner by what I saw
inside the yellow house a bike ride away
(When I had no time for friends, forts or
fishing for crawdads down at the creek).
Once, she had no time for dolls, house, hopscotch
patterns scratched on sidewalks.

Once July was a slow marching century, like
a soldier stuck in a swamp making no progress,
When I took her hand as carefully as I might
lift Grandma's best china from the cabinet
And we'd walk dreamily down sidewalks past
fading chalk squares and marbles forgotten.

Once my palms were damp with nervous love
as we'd wander the woods past fallen forts,
When we sat by the creek in the long shadows
of the birch trees watching perch play
And I drew her near and gently kissed her
and she held me hoping the moment wouldn't go.
When I released her I saw the glow of young
love in reflections of light on her amber hair.

Once, there was a young girl who lived in
a yellow house a bike ride away,
When we'd wander the park, cut grass clinging
to our feet and bull frogs singing sonnets,
And we'd pass cloudless days by the creek
watching boys proudly displaying stringers of fish.

Once, speaking of dreams we held, I said I
would be a lawyer; she, a doctor; we, married,
When days passed slow like the shallow water
down at Pratter's creek
And, as the sun fell behind Hanson's house,
hand in hand I'd walk her home.
Once, pausing on her porch, we'd listen to
locusts, children, dogs singing summer songs...



CHOCOLATE CAKE
Gregg McCallum

AMPHIBIOUS LULLABY
by Hank Augustyn

The rhythmic drumming of nature's raindrops
Provides the basis for the pond frog's chorus
and long after the gentle rain stops
A soothing song rings throughout the forest.

Sheltered in the towering, wavering grass
Beside the still yet deep, dark pool
A warning should a stranger pass
And disrupt him from his singing stool
...he would be silent for a moment then,
he would boast his whereabouts again.

Joined by one, then two, then three
The solo now a quartet
But adding to this melody
is something we have not heard yet

Another voice in the thinning fog
a droning in the distant mist
and the baritone voice of the big bull frog
is added to the crooners' list
Within minutes the moist night air
Is filled with nature's harmonious song
A song with lyrics unprepared
But everlasting 'till the sun breaks dawn

This never failing, reassuring lullaby
That aids the forest creatures to their sleep
Will dwindle, then slowly die
As daylight beckons the swallow to peep
...and bid its song of rising.

UNTITLED
John Rich

BABKA'S HOUSE

First Place Honors

by Roberta Lueth

When I was a child, I had no notion of the dramatic difference between where my grandparents lived and where they worked. I can remember walking down to the linen mill one day while my grandmother still worked there and being frightened by the giant whirring machinery and massive noisy looms. We stayed until her shift was over, and then we all walked along Mill Street together, stopping at the little corner market to buy a chicken and some potatoes for dinner. We walked up the hill past the rotten wooden steps leading to the terraced gardens; since my grandfather's accident, the outdoor repairs were neglected and the terrace stairs remained broken and useless. We walked instead up the long driveway, carrying our small bag of groceries, my mother struggling in her high heels, my grandmother in her sturdy work shoes trudging uncomplaining behind us all. She would stop at the top of the driveway for a moment to look at the house and her gardens, both falling into disrepair with the years. There was a gesture I remember her making, a small shrug of her shoulders as if to say, "This is mine; whatever else it is, it is mine."

My grandparents came to America from Poland in the early 1900's to escape the potato famine. Married two days before the boat was to sail, they arrived in America young and hopeful. There were no jobs in their small Polish village, and an uncle had written from Massachusetts telling of the jobs available in the mills along the Blackstone River.

They worked in a large, noisy cotton mill in Southbridge, my grandfather repairing the heavy machinery and my grandmother running an entire row of weaving looms which turned out cheap plaid cotton used for women's dresses. Like the rest of the immigrant workers, they lived in the houses supplied by the mill, small two-room shacks with no yards except the dirt street. My mother and her brother and sister were born in such a house. Behind the mill housing, a row of tall tenements stretched along the river on Mill Street and clung to the hill as the street wound its way up, until high above the river, it stopped at the cemetery. Just below this grassy hilltop, wasted, I always thought, on the dead, was the mill owner's house.

It looked like a little castle. My mother once told me that one of the mill owner's ancestors, who had been Scotch, had built it to remind himself of Scotland. It was built in 1761 entirely of stone and slate, the granite building stones streaked with lines and whorls of pink and grey and blue. The outer wall curved in a large arc from the rear of the house to the front porch; the other three sides were tall and square, with large leaded windows. Gables and turrets and strange angles a-

dorned the roof. Lawns were terraced with flower gardens connected to one another by small sets of wooden steps with delicate handrails. The entire yard covered about three acres and included a small barn, a grape arbor, and a large one acre vegetable garden surrounded by a low stone wall, along which wild blackberries grew intermingled with blossom-laden lilac bushes in purple and white.

For as long as she lived at the bottom of the hill in her two-room cabin, my grandmother had looked up at this imposing house. On Sundays, my mother recalls, she would walk up the hill and stop to rest on the last set of terrace steps leading from the pavement to the front door. The hill was steep and in winter was icy and treacherous, but my grandmother rarely missed a Sunday.

In 1934 that stone house was put up for auction. The current mill owner went bankrupt, then died. On the Saturday of the sale, my grandmother walked once more to the top of the hill; only this time, instead of stopping at the steps, she continued up the street to the long driveway. She had put money away from the day she arrived in America -- put it away, hidden from my grandfather who would have spent it on drink and his eternal barroom talk of returning someday to Poland. Put it away in jars, under mattresses, who knows where. On the day of the auction, there was my grandmother, in the front row, with her shapeless cotton dress, her peasant shoes, a babushka over her head, and twenty years of dollar bills stuffed into her heavy black purse.

She bought the house, full of its old overstuffed Victorian furniture. Her children were grown; only my mother still lived at home. My grandmother must have had plans, dreams of what she would do when she had saved more money, but the next year my grandfather broke his back in a fall from a ladder while painting the barn. He never worked again and received only a small pension. Her dreams ended. Now she worked to support them all. She continued to make the long walk down the hill to work in the mill, standing next to the women who still lived in the mill housing or the large, crowded tenements that lined Mill Street. Her house looked down on them all, but she stood at her noisy loom on the worn boards of the mill floor and wove the same cotton goods as the others.

My grandmother had three children and nine grandchildren. I was number six. David, Joey and Spike were the oldest; Susan and I the only girls, and Mark, Peter, Tommy and Billy the youngest. We all, each of us, firmly, childishly believed the house was a magic castle. To us, Babka was just the caretaker, waiting for the princes and princesses to return. My grandfather, slow, crippled and often neglected, was a shadow. Always there, sitting on his stump, whittling or feeding the squirrels, never eating at the table with us, he was an apparition. It was my grandmother's house.

The nine of us were always there for holidays and vacations. Six of us would sleep in the house; my Uncle Joe's boys went home at night, as they lived only a few miles away. There were five bedrooms and room to sleep four in the huge circular living room. Since the house was run down and filled with old furniture, ripped couches, soiled rugs, stained wallpaper, we were not under the usual restrictions to "be careful." We were in the habit of running wild throughout the house. My grandmother had a much higher tolerance for noise than either of her

daughters, and our gaiety could get out of hand totally before she would holler at us, in Polish, to settle down.

There were two kitchens in the rear of the house, one for cooking only, with a gas stove, a small enamel cabinet for spices and staples, a kitchen sink, and a large dark pantry with all the cereal boxes stored on the bottom shelves so we could reach them ourselves. The second, the "big" kitchen, contained a mammoth light green Taunton wood stove. This is where my grandmother would roast the holiday turkeys, boil the potatoes, fry the sausages and onions. The wood stove was kept going all year round, even in the heat of summer. On winter mornings, all of us would huddle around the open vents, stamping our feet on the cold linoleum floor and dressing in a frenzied group. The house also had a coal furnace, and in the winter we would hear, in our sleep, my grandmother going down the steep wooden stairs into the dimly lighted basement to stoke the furnace at four a.m. The heat from the coal stove, however, never rose to the second floor bedrooms; it barely heated the first floor. When we were not visiting, my grandparents lived in the bedroom and kitchens and shut up all the other rooms.

The large kitchen was the focal point of life since that was where my grandmother spent her entire day, cooking, baking, sewing. In the winter my grandfather had a chair in the corner and eventually they got a black and white Admiral television. The two of them would sit in their rocking chairs, my grandfather in his old maroon sweater with the unmended holes, my grandmother in her flowered apron and grey sweater. They'd watch the game shows, most of which they did not understand, since in those days it was possible to spend forty years in America (if you were in the right place) and never have to learn English.

When the nine of us children were together, whether during holidays or in the summer, our favorite place was the living room. It had an old upright piano with most of its ivories missing, but the inner workings were exposed in front and we loved to watch the hammers go up and down and to pluck the long strings with our fingernails and listen to them twang. The piano stool was a toy, a circus ride, and we would take turns crouched on top while an older brother or cousin would twirl us around until we were so dizzy we would fall off and someone else would take our place.

The living room was extremely large, large enough for four full-sized couches in varying states of wear and several dark horsehair overstuffed chairs, all of which we were allowed to vault over, jump on, and move around to make fortresses in the middle of the room. Or we could push the furniture up against the wall and play on the patterned carpet with its borders upon borders serving as roadways for all our tinker toy trucks and cars. We would each commandeer a favorite section of carpet (mine was in front of the piano) and set up villages made of blocks and books and playing cards. On rainy days we played for hours in our miniature world with its high ceiling and unused chandelier and no one would look in on us except to call us all to eat.

When the rain was accompanied by thunder and lightning, we liked nothing better than to close up the tall wooden inside shutters, close the two

doors, and shut out the lights. We would turn on the large console radio, which hadn't tuned in a station in years but still made a phosphorescent green light and played lovely static and wheezings. To the accompaniment of the old radio, we would all sit in the dark and my brother David would tell us "ghost" stories, imaginative combinations of Edgar Allen Poe, the Inner Sanctum and the gorrier comic books only the older boys were allowed to read. My cousin Joey would hide behind the couch and make weird noises and bumps and bangs to accent the story, and Spike would adjust the volume on the radio up and down while David whispered his horrid tales of bloodshed and terror. Outside the thunder shook the glass in the windows and made the branches of the large pine smash up against the side of the house. We were terrified and delighted, entertained and horrified. What a relief when Babka would push open the door, letting in the light from the warm kitchen and call us, in Polish, to sample some delicacy from one of her two kitchen stoves. If it was before a holiday, the treat would be *hrust*, a twisted dessert confection covered with powdered sugar and served warm.

Some days we would play upstairs, spread out among the four bedrooms playing hide and seek. We were not allowed to play this game downstairs, because the kitchen was full of people, my grandmother's bedroom with its high beds, ornate dressers, and picture of the black virgin was off limits, and the living room didn't have enough good places for all of us to hide in. But the upstairs was a labyrinth of small closets, alcoves, nooks and crannies, just perfect for hiding little bodies. And all of it dark, so that if we stayed very still, someone could open the door and feel around and not see anyone there, huddled in the corner with a blanket or old rug over their head. We could hide upstairs in the dark until we wondered if the others had given up the game and gone downstairs.

Sometimes they had, sneaking down and leaving me alone in the dark. But at other times I would emerge from my perfect hiding place to find the others waiting outside the door, tittering and laughing and running off, leaving me to be "it." If you were small, as I was, it was scary looking into the dark places for people. The older boys were apt to jump out and frighten me so badlly that I would sulkily refuse to be "it" anymore. Even though they called me names, I would march downstairs, secure in the knowledge that Babka would be in the kitchen and that there would be something good to eat. The others would follow soon after, and we would take the game outdoors, onto the terraced lawns and into the barn.

Or, if there were cars parked in the driveway along the side of the garden, the game would change to cops and robbers, and while the older boys (being the bad guys) would hop into the lead car, the rest of us would climb into the second car, hang out of the windows, and swing on the door handles from the running boards shooting imaginary pistols at escaping bank robbers. We could shout all we liked because we were outdoors, but the game would stop if Uncle Joe or Uncle Linc came back, cleared us out of their cars, and locked the doors.

It didn't matter. As soon as someone interrupted one game, another would break out somewhere else. When the boys had remembered to bring their pistols and toy rifles, they would use the terraces as make-believe bunkers and snipe at each other in a vigorous, intense game of "war." We younger children were

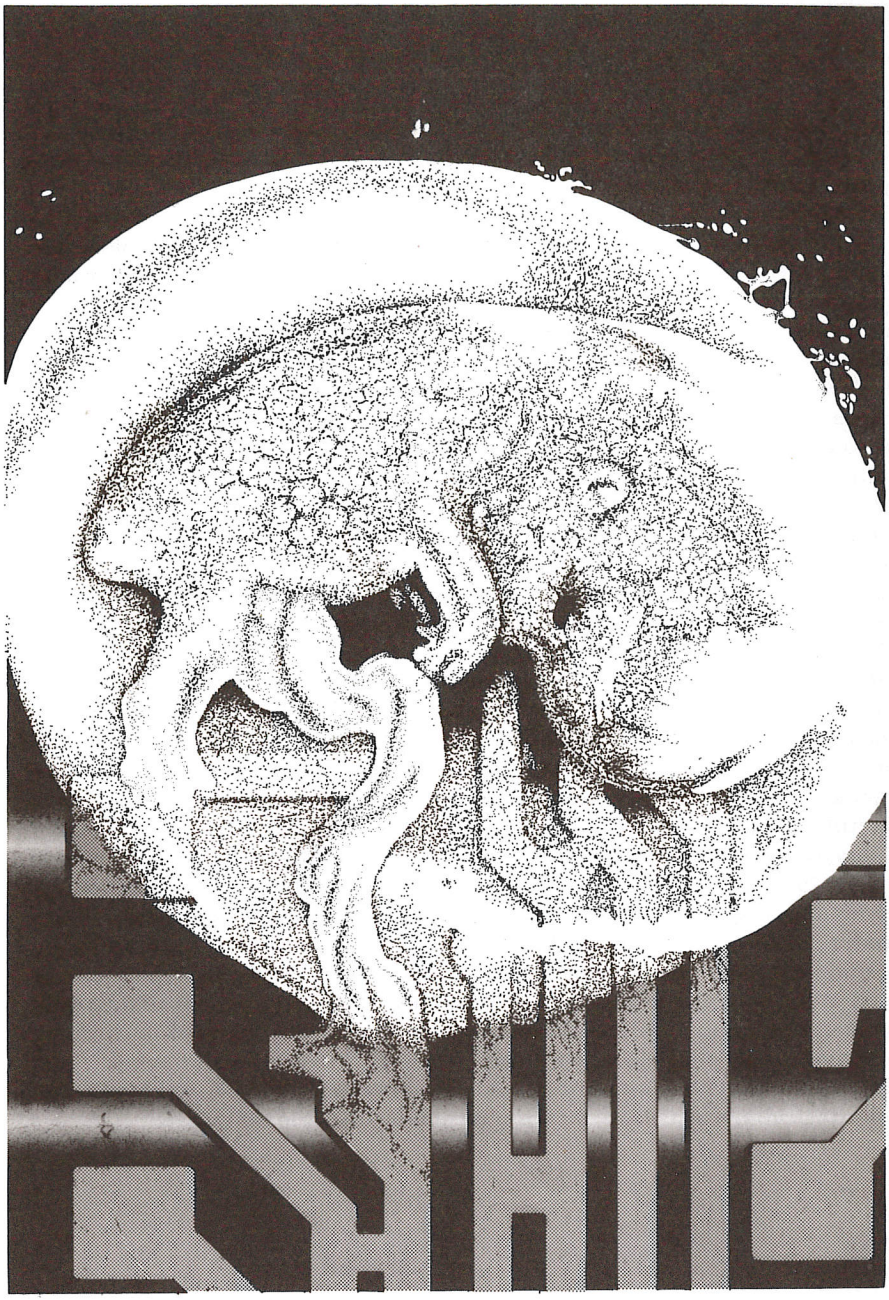
always prisoners to be herded from one secure place to another; the house was a fortress to be defended or taken by the enemy, depending on which of the boys was leading the battalion.

When the older boys tired of this, they would stomp on bees in the grass or go off behind the barn to sneak cigarettes. They were four and five years older, the three of them, and had a world of their own we couldn't enter. Susan and I would play instead in the grape arbor, reading aloud or setting our many dolls on the arbor roots, some of which were thick enough to act as chairs even for us. It was shady there, and if we were seen to be "behaving ourselves," someone from the house would be sure to bring out some lemonade and fresh baked cookies.

It was always the same, summer and winter, indoors and out, vacation after vacation. For fifteen years, until my grandmother died, we spent our wondrous childhood days in her marvelous old house, taking hot food and lax rules and magic for granted. When she died, the house was sold. Whoever bought it had the money necessary to fix it up, and I heard someone say later that they had done the inside in early American -- papered the walls, redone the floors, thrown out all the old furniture, put in a proper oven. I have never wanted to see the inside.

I have only to shut my eyes to see my grandfather sitting on his stump in the back yard with a squirrel in his lap, to see my grandmother in the kitchen and smell *hrust* frying. I close my eyes and listen for the sound of children's voices, whispering in the parlor, shouting from the gardens, giggling in the bedrooms: children running wild through the house and the flowers and the terraced lawns, chasing butterflies out of the poppy field, picking bouquets of colorful flowers for the table, uprooting the carrots, picking the blackberries, patting the rabbits in their hutches, sitting on the stone wall under the lilacs. Children swinging from the pine tree branches, hiding in the storm cellar, catching fireflies in mason jars, bumping into each other in the dark. Children sitting in the upstairs windows on the wide sills, watching the heat lightning spread out across the purple sky in late summer. Children running throughout the large stone house, room to room, searching for each other, peering into dark corners, slamming doors, racing down the staircase five steps at a time, hurrying through the rooms, winding the windows shut when a sudden summer storm blew all the curtains inward and threatened the wooden floors with rain.

My grandmother had nine grandchildren and a castle. Places in our lives are so rarely magical. We are blessed if we can remember those that were.



INTERFACE
John Rich

THE CHOSEN

by Debbie Young

Heeeeeelp! Is there life after divorce? Does anyone know where I can find a crash course in survival as a single mother? Would someone, anyone, *please* kill the spider on my bedroom ceiling so that I can get some sleep?

We single mothers are a courageous lot. We have to be; it's sink or swim for us. No matter what the obstacles, we have to hike up our pantyhose and persevere. Our children are dependent upon us. We can't quit now. Single mothers are easily spotted anywhere. We're the ones with the perpetual half-moon circles under our eyes from lack of sleep, the premature road-map wrinkles, and the broken, grass-stained fingernails on calloused hands. Have you seen a young woman with signs of severe scoliosis or over-developed biceps? Perhaps you have encountered a woman, usually with one or two children in tow, who appears to be on some sort of hallucinogenic drug. Her glassy eyes mirror her paranoia as she moves along, barely able to put one foot in front of the other. Have pity on her. Chances are, she is one of the chosen -- a single mother experiencing shock.

The mass media portrays the single life as a lark! Television brainwashes us into believing that single people get to travel, join health spas, go out to dinner with Mr. Wonderful. Don't believe it for a minute -- single mothers don't have the time. As a single parent, the only leisure time I have is bathroom time, and even then, I have to fight for it. Surviving the ultimate test, coping as a single mother while trying to maintain some semblance of sanity, will require endurance, an abundance of patience, a strong body and sound mind, and a well-developed sense of humor. If you can survive single-parenting and emerge in one piece, you can survive anything!

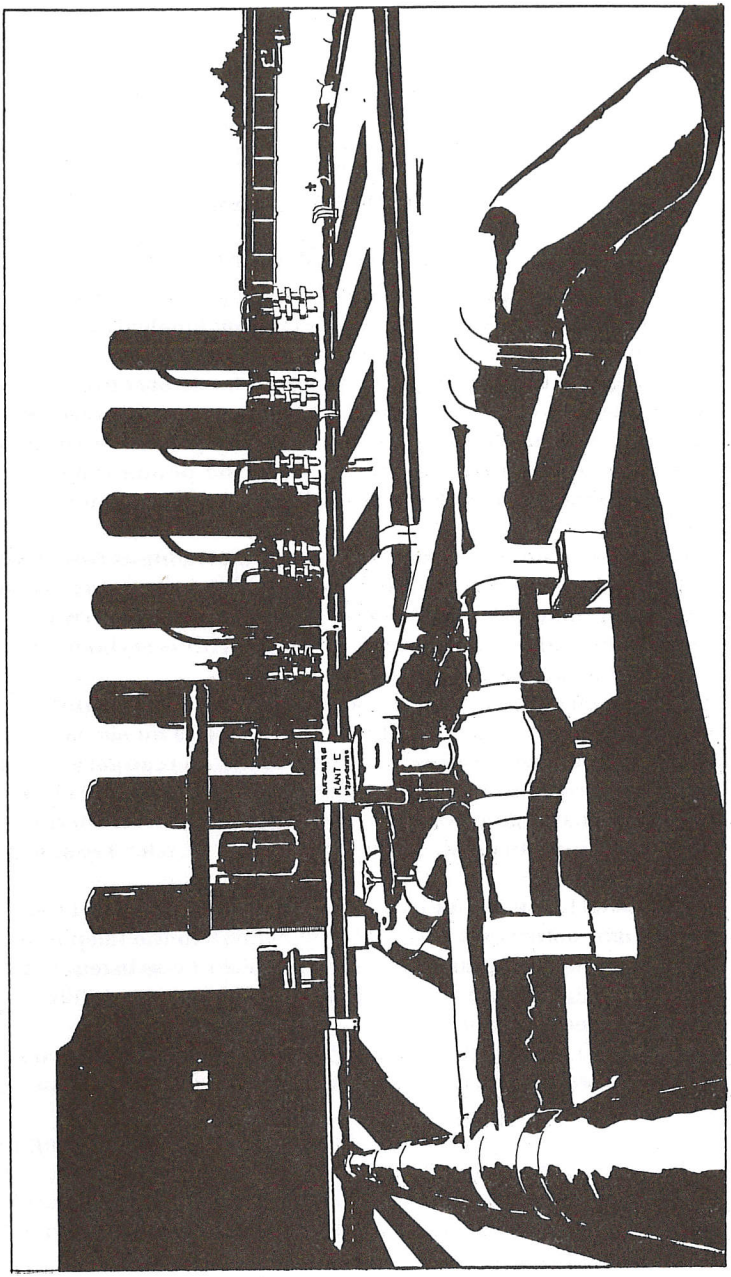
The first real test will occur immediately after the "man" of the family moves out. If you are fortunate enough to have any furniture left, sit down before you fall down. Panic may set in. Money, or the lack of it, will be one of your first problems. How will you pay the overdue bills he so graciously left you? How many days can you stretch left-over hamburger casserole in the refrigerator? When starvation is knocking on your door, there is no room for sentimentality. Sell your wedding rings. You may notice that the house that always seemed too small suddenly becomes overwhelmingly large as you envision yourself as the sole caretaker. It's all up to you now -- the lawn, the snow shoveling, the painting, cleaning, the garage that hasn't been cleaned in two years, and the leaky, bug-infested basement that somehow never got crossed off the list of things to do. Try not to indulge yourself in self-pity; rather console yourself with the fact that you never liked how "he" did it anyway. Now is your opportunity to finally do it the "right" way. When my

husband moved out, I couldn't remember what day of the week was trash day. By the time I found out (or thought I had), it took me three hours to drag all the trash to the curb, only to find out that I was two days early!

Then, there are the children. Depending on their ages and the circumstances, you will have to answer a multitude of questions and be able to give them a lot of love. How do you explain to a child that Daddy will no longer be living with him/her and that he really *did* need to take the television set with him? How can you make them understand that it is *not* their fault and that Mommy and Daddy will always love them? A word of caution -- we Moms can't make it all better for them, no matter how much we may want to. Let them cry; cry with them! It's okay! We don't have to be super-human. Of course they feel angry and sad; so do we. All we can do is our best and no more. Above all, don't criticize your spouse in front of your children. Bite your tongue, even if it hurts. Just ask me, no one ever died from a black and blue tongue. I didn't.

When I was married, I didn't have to face my fears. However, after the separation and divorce, they hit me full force. It made them easier to handle if I cleverly disguised them as "wonderful opportunities for personal growth" or learning experiences. For instance, I had the opportunity to overcome my paralyzing fear of spiders, and worse... the multi-legged centipedes threatening to control my basement. Today, I can proudly say that I am victorious over the hairy little creatures. How many married women can make that statement? Oh, it's true that I screamed and howled the first few times I had to kill a spider, but through practice I've narrowed it down to a soft shriek. I used to haul out my vacuum cleaner and let the suction do the dirty deed, protected by four feet of metal and a plastic hose. Now, I can single-handedly obliterate the offending spider in seconds, using *only* four sheets of heavy-duty paper toweling. The centipede requires a heavy spray of Black Flag. I can't quite bring myself to get any closer to it than a few feet. Progress, not perfection, but I'm working on it.

Living as a single mother does get easier with the passage of time. Today, my good days far outweigh the bad, and the bad aren't nearly as devastating. I have discovered that I have more skills and strengths than I ever realized. When the difficult days come, I try to have faith, knowing they will pass. I believe that God won't give me any more than I can handle for one day, and He's never let me down. Somehow, I *know* there must be a special place being prepared for single mothers in heaven. I wonder if I will have my own bathroom...?



UNTITLED
Gregg McCallum

PATTERNS

Second Place Honors

by Ross Starkey

Today is the Vernal Equinox -- Bach's birthday. It is a full season, now, from when I was released from the loony bin, and I feel compelled to record that which I can remember of my slide into madness.

It began almost two years ago, one cool summer evening: I remember that evening very well. As usual, I was alone, and there was nothing worth watching on the boob tube, so I was trying to plow my way through volume seven of The Story of Civilization and playing a record -- when the phone rang. It was an old-fashioned vinyl record from the Musical Heritage Society which I was playing; I eschew C D's.

It was Ed Faught on the phone, an associate and nemesis from the chess club. He greeted me by calling me Ernie, even though I'd corrected him many times about that -- my name is Erwin! I asked him if he was trying to throw off my next game, but I don't think it registered. He, along with everybody else, seemed to ignore most of what I said.

"Ernie," he asked, "you're a big fan of Baroque music, right?"

"Uh," I stammered, "Ja, I'm a 'big fan' of Baroque music, ja."

"Yah," he mimicked. "Well, why don't you see if you can get yourself over here to Christchurch right away, o.k.? You know where Christchurch is?"

"Ja, ja. But what is going on? Why do you want me over there?"

"There's some organ music I want you to listen to, o.k.? Try and get over here right away, o.k.?"

I almost asked him whether it was French organ music he wanted me to listen to, but I thought better of it, said "Oh kay," hung up the telephone, got myself together, put on my shoes, and waited for the piece I was listening to to finish. It was Pachelbel's Chaconne in F, a piece I had loved since my childhood. Ironically, it was being played on an organ.

I seem to have associated what happened next with that chaconne, for after returning home last winter, I made the mistake of playing it, and I was reduced to a silly, blubbering little infant.

When I got to Christchurch, I entered the sanctuary, not knowing quite what to expect. Not seeing anyone, I proceeded toward the logical place, the organist's console. Ed was there, seated at the organ. He greeted me in a careless way.

"Hello, Ed," I answered back. "What do you want me to listen to?"

He put a finger to his lips, as if to motion for silence, and then turned his hand and, with the same finger, pointed at the music sheets arranged in front of him. "Listen to this," he said almost reverently.

Sound filled the church: an initial noisy chord, and then a rising, and then a falling series of notes, and then the introduction of a counter-subject, then the contrapuntal variations of an unfamiliar fugue. While he was playing the piece, I looked at the sheet music. The notes looked indistinct, fuzzy; I looked closer. They were dot-matrix.

After he had finished, he unfolded himself from the bench he was seated on, stood up, turned and faced me. "Well, wasn't that good?" he asked.

"Um, ja, it didn't sound bad," I answered.

"Who was it by?"

"Wha?"

"Who wrote it?" he asked, thinking to make the question clearer, perhaps.

"I don't know who wrote it," I answered.

"Well then, who does it *sound* like?"

I suddenly felt anxious, a little frightened, maybe. My voice was louder than it usually is: "Am I supposed to be some Master Music Theorist, someone who's memorized every piece by everybody? I don't know!"

"Well, who do you *think* it sounded like?"

"I only heard the piece once! How--?"

"Oh, Hell!" he exclaimed, throwing himself back onto the organ bench. He played the unfamiliar fugue a second time.

While he was playing it, I stood there, filled with a sense of onrushing doom. I felt like a drunken maniac driving toward a brick wall, always faster, always faster. I wanted to turn and run, to escape.

When he finished playing, he stood up, turned to me and asked, "Well, now, who do you *think* that *might* have *sounded like*?"

"It sounded like Bach!" The words were torn from me.

Ed broke a wide smile, almost triumphant. "Ah, excellent!" he said. "Very good. It *did* sound a lot like old Bach, didn't it? But it was written only this week. And do you know *who* wrote it? A computer program, which *I* wrote!"

I closed my eyes, opened them. The maniac smashed into his brick wall. I felt a sudden tightening around my throat and eyes, my heart started racing, I could not speak. I was afraid I might lose consciousness, and I recalled Job being reprimanded by God, and a certain wretched monster reproving its creator.

"Why?" I gasped. "Why?"

"I call my program Fritz," he said, ignoring me. "Isn't it an excellent name?"

I tried to picture Ed in the attire of a nineteenth century baron, failed. "Why Fritz?" I asked.

"For Fritz Chrysler. You know who he was?"

"Oh. Yes. Of course." Oh yes, good old Fritz Chrysler of the twentieth century, who wrote all that violin music and then claimed to have discovered it in some monastery someplace, and oh look ,in the corner there, someone's initials -- J. S. B. My, my!

"But *why*?" I asked.

"Look," he said, "do you know how hard it is for one man to design, code and debug a program like this -- and on only fifteen hours a *week* of computer time? That's all the school would give me. Using my micro as a terminal. It's taken me three *years* to write this program. And some of the things I've envisioned will require more than fifteen man-hours a week on a timesharing system! I'll require men working under me, my own computer -- and I don't mean a micro! -- and above all, money. More than I have and more than I can raise. I wrote this program only to show what I can do, to attract money, to call attention to myself, to make people remember me and say, 'Faught? He wrote that program that writes Bach!' "

I got a little dizzy then, but I kept my balance. "But why *Bach*?" I asked. "Why not someone like Rameau... or Telemann... or..."

"Ah, Telemann!" he interrupted. "Over seven thousand pieces, and all of them as like as Kansas wheat fields. Yes, his style *would* have been easier to simulate. I considered him..., but as I just said, I need to call attention to myself -- and how many people have ever even *heard* of Telemann, much less care anything about him? Do *you*?"

"Well, he did write some nice pieces," I would have said, but I was interrupted again.

"And the Classical and Romantic composers, Mozart, Beethoven, they were too... *emotional*."

I would have used a different word. There's plenty of emotion in Baroque music. No one who's heard Bach's De Profundis can ever doubt that: *Out of the depths of the chasm, I cry unto Thee; O Lord, hear my voice...*

Struggling to keep my voice steady, I asked him how his program worked. He began lecturing: "My program can be broken into two main parts: melody generation and fugue construction. As to melody generation, a piece of music is one dimensional and..."

"One dimensional!?"

"Well, yes, ah, I'm sure you can see how easy it would be, for instance, to take the most complex sound wave and digitalize it into a bar code, which is a graphic illustration of the..."

"You could digitalize Shakespeare?"

"Well yes, of course you could, that would be quite easy. Just assign a digital value to each of the letters making up his plays. They probably already have. But that's something different... at any rate, all that any piece of music is is a collection of tone-intervals; certain intervals just happen to sound nice to us; others just happen to sound not nice at all. It's the nice sounding intervals our music is made up of; at least any music I'd listen to. There are also certain rules of music theory that govern the relationships between tone-intervals in a melody, the *patterns*. What my program does is it uses all of these rules to generate a melody at random, as other programs might generate designs for Persian carpets or Alhambra-style mosaics or a chess move -- more or less at random. Now, not all subjects are appropriate for a fugue..."

"There's an idea. Call your program 'the gross.' Call it 'the grossest!' "

"What are you talking about?"

"I'll tell you. In 1747, three years before he died, Bach went to Potsdam, Prussia, at the request of Frederick der Grosse-- 'the great'..."

"I know German."

"Oh. Of course you do. And Frederick presented Bach with a little tune of his own composition and commanded him to make a six-part variation on it. That tune was 'not a suitable subject for a fugue' but look at what Bach did with it!"

"The Musical Offering," Faught said.

"Das musikalisches Opfer," I corrected him, "and 'Opfer' translates as 'sacrifice, oblation, victim, casualty...' "

"Are you quite all right?"

"No, I'm not quite all right! I... um... aigh! All my life, I've loved Bach. I've venerated him. I've made a minor god out of him almost, and now you come along to tell me that he was no better than this fancy pebble-board of yours! So what do you want me to think?"

For the first time since I had arrived, there was a moment of silence in the church.

"Did you know," I continued, "that in 1789, two years before *his* death, Mozart journeyed to Potsdam? But before he got there, he stopped off at Leipzig, where Bach had worked for many years. There were some of Bach's mouldy old motets lying around the Thomaskirche, and Mozart took a look at them, exclaimed, 'Here is something from which one still may learn,' and was so astonished by them that he spread the pages out on the floor and was crawling around from page to page, on his hands and knees, hours after everyone else had left! This was *Mozart*!!"

For once, Ed seemed at a loss for words. "Well, Bach was a genius; there's no doubt of that...," he stammered. "But," he added, "Mozart never met my program."

I couldn't take any more; I had to get out. Struggling to control a very alien rage, I asked him, "How many pieces has this binary abacus... composed... so far?"

Smiling a little at my little joke, he answered: "A canon, a ricercare, a prelude and fugue, a passacaglia and fugue, trio sonata, and two chorales, all for organ. Enough for an album. I've had a few tapes made up. I can let you have one if you want it, but I'm hoping to market it. There should be a lot of interest out there in something like this. Among the young people especially. They worship technology, computers. I could stand to make a lot of money. I might even turn some of the kids on to Bach!"

"*Absolvat te*," I muttered. "Do you have your machine's tape here?"

"Yeah. I have several. I can let you have them at the cost of the tape: $4.11."

Feeling like the proverbial cat, I gave him $4.20 and he gave me a tape .He didn't offer to make change.

I left the church then and went home. I forgot to genuflect before the altar, and I felt badly about it afterwards.

When I got home, it was dark. I put the tape in my tape deck and listened to it four times, thinking about Talos, Hephaestus' bronze giant, stomping around Crete three times a day; automatons, throngs of perambulate brooms carrying

buckets of water, golems, Dr. Faustus, Frankenstein's monster, and the walking dead. And I recalled what one of Bach's contemporaries said upon hearing him playing: "It can only be the Devil... or Bach himself!"

I didn't go to work the next day. I called in sick and spent the day moping around. I thought of beginning playing my Bach recordings, but that would have taken a very long time, for I have at least one recording of everything that has come down to us, everything. And for just about everything besides his cantatas, I have two, four, eight recordings.

I never have become very familiar with his cantatas. I resolved to pay more attention to them in the future. It's just that there were so many of them!

At one time I had been able to play the piano, after a fashion. So now I dug out the sheet music to Bach's two-part inventions from where they'd been accreting all these years and spent the rest of the day working through the easy ones. My piano's tone was awful -- so badly in need of tuning! But I had never noticed what a state of disrepair it was in, for there'd been no one to play it, for so long, for so very very long...

The next day, I did a very odd thing. First, I called in sick again; then I went to a local shop that deals in such things, and I bought up all sorts of Bach sheet music. All of his organ music, just about all of his harpsichord music, a lot of his cantatas, his violin sonatas, flute sonatas, cello sonatas, de gamba sonatas, trio sonatas, motets and chorales, suits, and concertoes, The Musical Offering and his great sacred masses and oratorios, I bought the music to. Hundreds of dollars of music sheets, reams of them, stacks and piles and armloads I bought so that I had to get help taking it all out to my car. After this I went home, selected a certain simple-looking piece of harpsichord music, found one of my recordings of that piece, put it on, and did my best in following it along note for note, often stopping and going back to the beginning.

And so it went. Over the next several weeks or so, I'm not sure how long, the days melted one into another like shadows, but over those few weeks or so, I stayed home, running out of my accumulated sick-time, and, for the first time in my life, I learned how to read music. And when I say that I learned how to read music, I don't mean that I learned how to go E-G-B-D-F, every good boy deserves fudge, A-C-E-G, all cows eat grass, et cetera. I mean that I learned how to read a music-sheet like a printed page, a fugue like a sonnet, a concerto like a poem. To be able to read along as I was playing a recording of Bach's Italian Concerto, or his C major violin sonata it was a very great joy.

Eventually I worked up the chutzpah to study The Art of the Fugue, possibly Bach's greatest work -- but it is unfinished. He began work on it in 1748, two years before he died. In 1750, his eyesight was failing because of cataracts, so he submitted to an operation by the quack English oculist, the Chevalier Taylor. Taylor blinded him; three years later, he would go on to blind Handel.

It was at about this time that Bach suffered the first of at least two strokes. On top of all this, he was obliged to take several unpleasant medicines and endure their side effects. Naturally, he was confined to bed. Despite all this, however, he continued to work -- dictating the music to his son-in-law, even from his deathbed.

The last fugue of The Art of the Fugue is the so-called Fuga a Tre Soggetti. It is one of the biggest, grandest, most beautiful fugues in the world, and *it* is unfinished. At the very end, it unravels voice by voice, until there is only one voice left, and this voice ends in mid *phrase*, dying suddenly, abruptly.

The Art of the Fugue teaches Bach's art by example; it summarizes his life's learning and invention. Naturally, it is far beyond me; if I knew ten times what I knew then, I still could only stand in awe, like a fearful supplicant. Yet still, I studied it.

It was while studying it, one day, that a realization gradually came upon me: that that infernal machine, and the djinni that Ed Faught had put inside it, did not write in the style of Bach at all. What they wrote sounded a lot like Bach, but it wasn't like Bach, not at all. It was as if a painter had studied Da Vinci and could mimic him very well, even down to the brush-strokes, and had gone ahead and painted a painting in the style of Da Vinci using acrylics instead of oils. It was the same sort of thing. Look here, I imagined myself saying to Faught, and look here and look here, this isn't like Bach! Not at all! A three-year old child could do better! However, I did not say these things to Faught, and I did not return to the chess club which I had been absent from for -- how long?

I did return to work, though, and I began to return to my former way of life, spending my hours reading fiction and history, listening to stereo broadcasts, watching television once in a while.

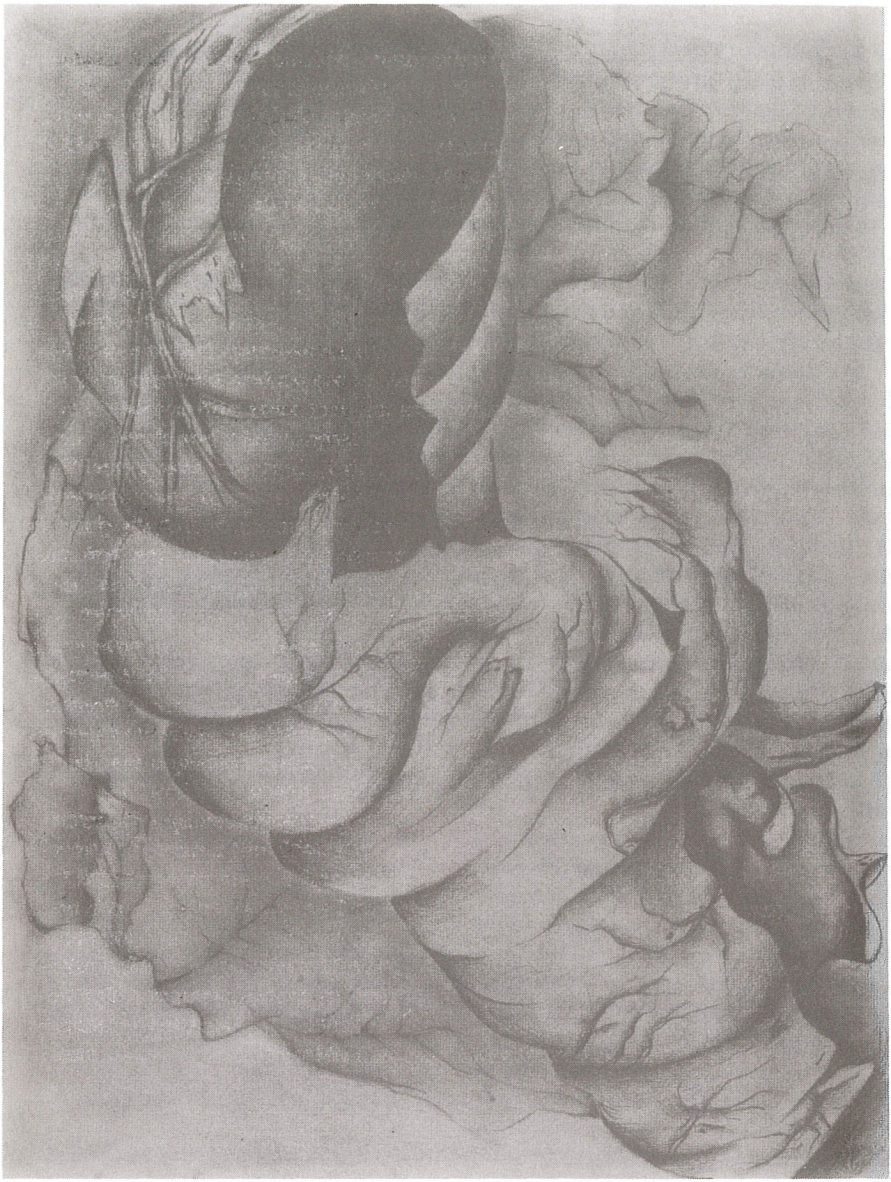
But one afternoon, I was listening to the stereo with one ear, and I heard the show host (Drive Time D.J., he called himself) say something about *Dr.* Ed Faught and his wonderful program, something about how one of his records was number six on the pop charts, something about how the program had been given what Bach had written of the Fuga a Tre Soggetti -- and had completed it! A machine. A machine. A MACHINE!!!

I couldn't say for sure what happened next; things got very dark and turbulent and noisy. They tell me I tried to kill Faught. I don't believe that.

From that day until this, it's been sixteen months by the calendar. I seem to have lost about a half-year, maybe more, maybe less; they kept me so full of chemicals I was never sure about time. Every day it was more pills, more syrups, more strange, repetitive things I had to do, more crazy people I had to talk to about my parents, my childhood, my job, my divorce -- my beautiful wife, who could play the piano, oh, so beautifully...

Now that I'm back home, I have discovered that I no longer care for music. There is nothing preventing me from listening to it; I simply no longer can enjoy it. They have taken my only joy from me...

So now, here I sit, the silence broken only by the clicking of the keyboard under my hands, the annoying whine of the idiot box in front of me, the occasional churning of the disk drive to one side. I sit in darkness, for my universe has no sun, no moon, no stars, only black clouds, and a storm wind drives the Sands of Time into my face, bringing tears to my eyes.



ORGANIC DRAWING
Mark Falls

SECRET GARDENS, SECRET ROOMS

First Place Honors

by Roberta Lueth

My demons cavort
through walled gardens
worrying the dried
bookpressed roses
uprooted, broken, tossed
by their nervous hands.

Dawn brooms them
dissipated
into a corner closet
where they huddle
later plotting
squatting on slender thighs
whispering
rocking on tails
devilish

until one on another
they mount
reach the keyhole
and are free.

They scatter into the circular
manydoored Victorian parlor
filled with useless treasured tokens
chase out the frightened maid
darken the lighted dome
and stoop behind dusty chairs

tittering like birthday party imps
waiting impatiently
for me to turn my thoughts
into that secret room.

WINTER TRACE, das URTEIL*

by R.A. White

Winter thrusts itself across the landscape,
    wrapping wooden fences in dime store ermine.

Tree trunks, starkly black,
    bearded white with snow,
    raise time-bent fingers upward in gnarled supplication.

Toward azure sky so pure,
    it challenges the heart.

In truth the moment comes,
    there is no hiding place round here.

The poor drink mead in plastic cups,
    and call it love.

Unafraid to say it, be it, do it,
    earth-bound redemption.

A luxury not afforded by the mighty.
No time.
Not now.
Perhaps someday,
                and they grow old.

Never knowing the warmth of mead,
    unable to see love,
    albeit clad in rags.
Vision clouded by social cataracts,
    a goblet of dross their companion.

Yes, in truth the moment comes.
Pity those who cannot feel it.
Pity all the more,
                those who feel it,
                and have not the courage.

The winter wind leaves traces.
Sanskrit in the snow.

*The Judgment

UNTITLED
Pam Ridner

THE SUM OF THE PARTS

Second Place Honors

by Colleen Baron

A child arrives in this world unfettered by preconceived notions and ideas. As he moves through life, he is influenced by his physical and social environment. Everything he experiences becomes an integral part of his very being. Walt Whitman, a master in the use of figurative language, beautifully describes a myriad of sensory stimuli that become a part of the child as he matures into adulthood. The poem, "There Was a Child Went Forth," is an excellent example of this process.

Whitman introduces his concept of influence in lines two and three when he says, "And the first object he look'd upon, that object he became,/And that object became part of him..." He sees the possibility of long range effects of the initial birth experience with the phrase "...stretching cycles of years." (1.4) His repetition of the words "object," "day," and "years" increases the impact of his statements. It stresses the lifelong importance of the bonding process.

Man, as part of nature, has a very real attraction to the outdoors. He absorbs its essence and becomes one with nature. Whitman uses words beautifully to gently brush a watercolor painting on the canvas of childhood. From "the early lilacs..." (1.5) to "...esculent roots of the garden" (1.12) and from "...the song of the phoebe-bird" (1.6) to " ...the noisy brood of the barnyard..." (1.8), he creates a picture of sights and sounds that become part of life as a child listens to and looks at the world around him. The author uses personification effectively with descriptions like "...fish suspending themselves so curiously below..." and the "...curious liquid." (1.9) He shows us beauty and value by using examples of the simplest and most mundane plant and animal life such as "Winter-grain sprouts..." (1.12) "...the sow's pink-faint litter, and the mare's foal and the cow's calf' (1.7) and "...the commonest weeds by the road." (1.13)

Whitman makes us aware of the immense value of social interaction in molding the human personality. We grow up, not in a sterile cocoon, but in a world containing a broad mix of good and evil. His metaphor "...outhouse of the tavern..." (1.14) symbolizes both the evil within and the evil in the entire civilized world. His description of "...the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls..." (1.17) depicts the innocence of youth.

He shows us how easily a child can learn to be gentle, moral, and loving, or to be cruel, hard, and tough. The poet does this with a strong contrast between mother and father in lines twenty-two through twenty-five when he says:

> The mother at home quietly placing the dishes on the supper-table,
> The mother with mild words, clean her cap and gown, a wholesome

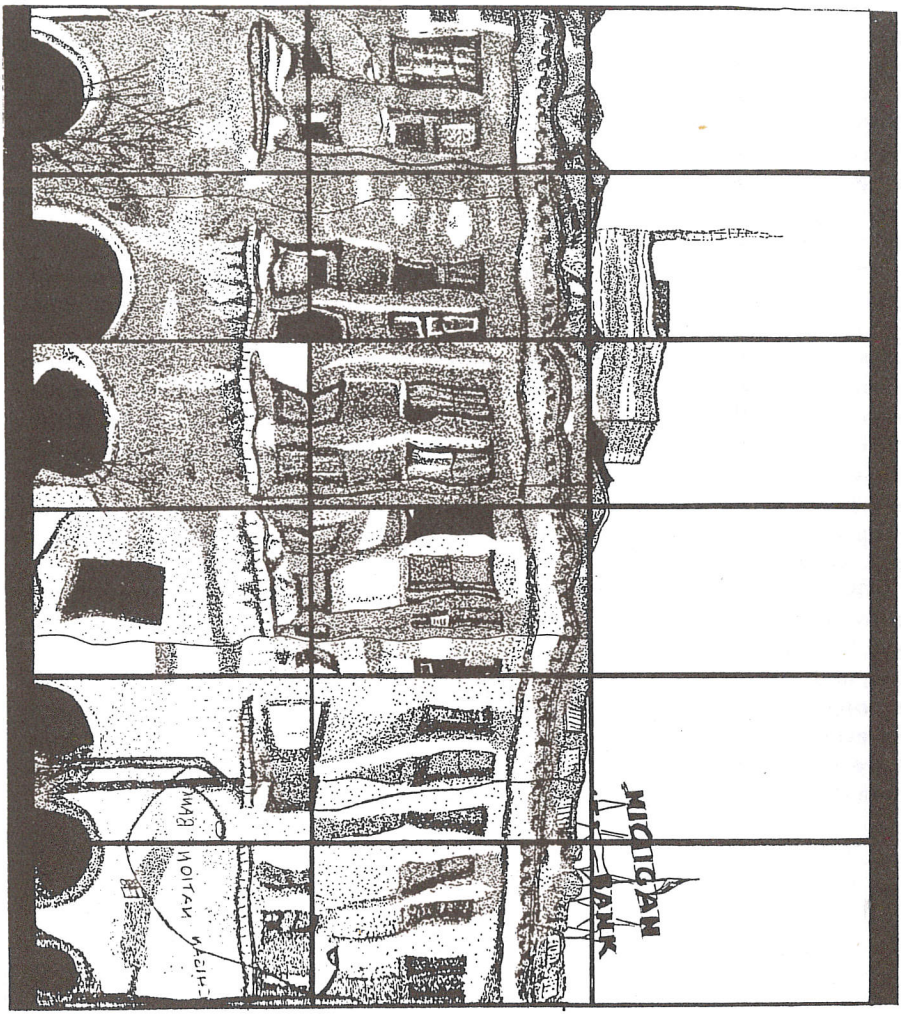
odor falling off her person and clothes as she walks by,
The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean, anger'd, unjust.
The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the crafty lure,

A child learns how to be an adult from behavior that is observed and treatment that is received from adults. Always there is an indelible impression left on the soft clay of a young mind.

Whitman deals with philosophical and intellectual aspects of life, using doubts, questions, and boundless curiosity of the child. He poses the question, "Whether that which appears so, is so, or is it all flashes and specks?" (1.29) Are things really what they appear to be? If they are not, then what are they? He provokes thought and allows readers to reach their own conclusions about how and where a child actually finds truth.

In lines thirty-one through thirty-five of the poem, Whitman deals with physical surroundings. The village streets and homes, vehicles of transport both on land and sea are part of the child's environment. All these things and his perception of them become part of a child as he develops a value system. Then to illustrate the necessity of balance between natural and material aspects of life, the writer returns to nature. He vividly describes the land, sea, and sky. Brilliantly utilizing personification, he writes of "the hurrying tumbling waves, quick-broken crests slapping." (1.36) We can hear the sounds of the sea. We can visualize "the strata of color'd clouds, the long bar of maroon-tint..." (1.37) and "...the flying sea-crow...". (1.38) We can smell "...the fragrance of salt marsh and shore mud."(1.38)

The last line, in its simplicity draws us back to the beginning. It sums up the entire concept that Whitman is presenting in "There Was a Child Went Forth." He says, "These become part of that child who went forth every day, and who now goes, and will always go forth everyday." (1.39) Every item the child sees, every person he meets, every sound he hears, every aroma he smells, every doubt he has, every question he has answered, every good he tastes becomes a part of him. There is nothing in life that doesn't touch him in some way; everything in life has some shaping influence on a child as he journeys toward adulthood.



REFLECTIONS
A. Quenneville

A SYMBOLIC SEED

Second Place Honors

by Ron O'Dell

A little seed begins slowly to swell as it draws moisture from the earth. The seed swells until suddenly the embryonic root pushes through the seed coat. The root goes forth in search of food. Slowly it gathers more and more nutrients which are digested so that a tiny embryonic shoot may start to grow. As the roots spread even farther in search of food, the plant grows taller and stronger.

Reading is similar to the seed sprouting. Small words and phrases are read first. As more knowledge is attained, larger words and longer phrases are read. Then a need for more knowledge begins to grow. Like the root that comes from the seed looking for nutrients, the human mind uses reading to search for the knowledge it needs to grow. Every time something new is read, a higher level of knowledge is attained, and as the plant grows stronger, so does the mind.

This knowledge is sometimes easier to understand or visualize when the writer uses figurative language to convey it to the reader. Symbols like those used in the first two paragraphs lead the reader into a scene. The scene here shows how reading is like a seed sprouting. Poets often use symbols to show how life is symbolic in other objects. Sylvia Plath wrote a poem in metaphors. It shows many things that are symbolic of an expectant mother. For example, there are nine lines and each line has nine syllables. These symbolize the nine months of pregnancy. Every line of the poem is in some way significant of the expectant mother. Plath entitled it "Metaphors" to emphasize this point of representation.

In his story "The Bear," William Faulkner described how the bear disappeared into the forest: "Then it was gone. It didn't walk into the woods, the undergrowth. It faded, sank back into the wilderness as he had watched a fish, a huge old bass, sink and vanish into the dark depths of its pool without even any movement of its fins." Here he used the comparison that a great bear can move as quickly and as quietly as an old and wise bass moves. He compares activities that are similar to each other, yet not always obvious.

When Carl Sandburg wrote "Honey and Salt," he used concrete objects to describe an abstract feeling. The feeling of love is hard for anyone to really visualize. By using descriptions of objects he answered many questions about love: "How long does love last? As long as glass bubbles handled with care... or one solid immovable steel anvil...". The glass bubbles show that love could last forever, but it can also be very fragile. The steel anvil gives the impression of permanence. Symbols play an important part in placing meaning in this poem.

Writers use symbols to plant a little seed of thought in the mind of the reader. The object is to get the reader involved with what is being read so the reader can see, feel, taste, hear, and smell what the auhtor is trying to present in the story or poem.

BUGGED OUT
Chuck Yates

MATABULA

First Place Honors

by Roberta Lueth

The engine of the Land Rover sputtered and died halfway up the hill, and the spotlight Matabula held in his hand went dark. The guide cranked the engine over and over, but it would not fire. He picked up the radio transmitter.

"Bush, this is Mike. The lorry's stalled a few hundred yards from the gate. I'm walking everyone in. Over."

"Mike, Bush. Come on right straight up the road. Nothing's been reported in your area. Everyone else is in. Over." The radio's static seemed harsh and loud in the silence of the bush without the low putt putt of the Land Rover which had been background noise for the three hours of the night drive.

"We're leaving now, Bush. Over and out."

Mike replaced the transmitter and helped the four American tourists down from the high bed of the Land Rover. Matabula jumped down from his perch on the hood and threw his yellow foam cushion into the front seat. They all stood for a moment in the middle of the dusty road. The trees hung over on both sides of the narrow track. There were no stars, no lights, only the deep silence of the South African night.

Suddenly from the trees above their heads came a series of piercing howls.

"What's that?" both children asked at the same instant.

"Baboon," Mike answered. "See. There they are." Everyone looked up, but all they could see were large shadows moving away through the very tops of the trees.

"Is that what we heard last night, after we were in bed, Mike? It didn't sound like that."

Mike didn't answer but shrugged and reached inside the lorry for his canvas wrapped gun. Matabula leaned forward and mumbled something under his breath. Mike nodded.

"Lion," he said. "You heard the old lion. Hunting on the airstrip." The children looked around, their eyes widened in the gloom. They pressed closer to Mike.

"Not here. Further away. We'd better get into the compound, though. They don't like us out on foot, even here." Mike handed the long rifle to Matabula and said something in Shangaan, and the tracker moved quietly some ten yards to the rear. Mike pulled a small flashlight from under the seat, and, leading the small group up the road, he pointed out the deep ruts made by the recent rains and cautioned the children to stay close behind him.

"Mike," asked the boy, "why was the lion roaring like that? If he's hunting, won't the animals hear him and run away?"

"There's a Shangaan saying, 'An old lion roars to keep himself company.' Matabula says it all the time; I'm not sure what it means."

Just then the road turned slightly, and they could see the faint lights from the compound penetrating the heavy bush. They finished the walk in silence, and as Mike led them through the gate, he reminded them that the dinner horn would sound in fifteen minutes. Then he doubled back, retrieved the gun from his native tracker and with long strides covered the twenty-odd yards of the compound parking area and disappeared into the main lodge.

Matabula did not follow Mike into the main compound but instead turned to the right just inside the gate, went through a narrow opening in the woven rushes, and edged around the six or seven Land Rovers already parked in the service area. His uniform was dusty and there were large round sweat stains under the arms of his safari shirt. His pant cuffs were full of dried grass and dirt. He had taken off his dark green sweater when he'd gotten down from the lorry and now it was draped over his shoulders like an old woman's ragged shawl. Like the rest of Matabula's clothes, it too was covered with the red-brown dust of the bush.

Matabula entered the trackers' quarters and, sitting down heavily on his narrow bed, bent over with a slight groan and unlaced and removed his tan work boots. He wore no socks. He leaned his head back against the whitewashed wall of the long room and let his eyes rest on the ceiling while his toes wiggled and tensed and rubbed against each other.

At the other end of the room, a tall uniformed black came out of the communal bathroom, rubbing his wet hands on his unbuttoned shirt. He grinned at Matabula.

"Hey, old man, Mike's lorry broke down again, huh?" Matabula gave a grunt but did not move.

"What's the matter, the walk back too much for your old bones?" Matabula stared at the ceiling and watched a large spider moving across the high rough-beamed roof, dragging its silk after it from beam to beam. It moved slowly and heavily among the thatch.

"Kids give you a rough time?" Matabula turned to look at the speaker. The other tracker was removing his dirty shirt and putting on a clean one. His pants were not dusty and had crisp creases down the fronts and backs of the trouser legs.

"No," said Matabula. "The children are no problem. It's a change from the adults, those who only come for a day and want to see the big ones. The children see the land with fresh eyes, even the smallest thing delights them." He stopped talking, aware that the other native was not listening.

The younger tracker was posing in front of a broken mirror, adjusting his safari hat at a jaunty angle, turning his head this way and that to catch the effect. He leaned close to the glass and smiled, exposing a line of straight brilliant white teeth.

"Well, I'm glad you and Mike have them and not me," he said. He buttoned the cuffs of his freshly ironed shirt and tightened his belt.

"Coming to see the fun?" he asked. "The women will dance tonight -- there's a full house, you know."

Matabula turned away. "No, Nmako. I don't want to watch. I'm tired. Besides you young men don't know what real dancing is, you can't remember..." He stopped, staring at the far wall, seeing something that wasn't there, but was reflected nonetheless in his watery brown eyes.

"When I was twenty," he continued, "when the old chief was still alive..."

"Oh, crap, Matabula. All the time you're talking about what it used to be like, nothing's as good as before, we're all too young to remember. Staring off in the distance, seeing visions. So what? Tonight the women will dance, real women, and later... well, I'm not going to turn down a chance to lie with one of them."

Nmako made a final whirl in front of the mirror, leaned over and brushed the dust from his shoes, stuck a clean handkerchief in his shirt pocket and went out the door. Matabula could hear the sound of drums from the boma and the bustle of the native girls as they giggled and jostled each other, waiting to enter the circle. They were dressed in colorful skirts and halters. They would dance tonight around the bonfire, stamping their feet in the dust of the boma, making their ankle bracelets bounce and clatter as they clapped their hands and sang the old songs, songs taught to them by their mothers and their grandmothers. They would dance because there was a full house. No one ordered them to dance, but they each knew it would mean more and bigger tips from the tourists in the natives' "gratuity" jar in the morning.

Matabula returned to watching the spider and blocked out the sounds coming from the nearby boma. It had been a strange day. Oh, it had started out the same as any other. The American family had asked if they could have the lorry all to themselves. They told the Baas they didn't want to dash here and there across the bush anymore, chasing after elephant and wild dog. They preferred to take their time and view the smaller game, especially the birds. The woman wanted time to take pictures and the children -- Matabula chuckled to himself as he thought about the last three days and the children's non-stop questions.

Matabula had worked the Sabi-Sand Game Reserve for fourteen years and in all that time had seen only a handful of children among the wealthy tourists; these two were the first in more than a year. The little boy was the same size as Matabula's own grandson, and just as thin, with skinny long legs and glasses. His sister was taller and had long dark hair and deep blue eyes. She had a name just like her brother's; he had had to ask Mike why the parents called both children by the same name. Mike had explained that the girl's name was Andrea, but they were both called Andy. Matabula had shrugged and thought it strange.

The little girl had sharp eyes and right from the first day out she had been able to spot the giraffe easily in the heavy bush. After she had done this three or four times and had been chattering away to her parents and to Mike, Mike had leaned forward and said to Matabula, "The girl is keeping score, Matabula, and you are now four giraffe behind." At first he had not understood the term "keeping score," but when Mike explained that it was a game, he had joined in and the next five giraffe had been his. But the girl was clever, and she had waited until Matabula was watching the trail for spore. As soon as he was occupied with footprints, she

had searched out four more giraffe far off in the distance. Then her mother had let her use the camera and he had once again caught up.

The children were a bigger problem for Mike. They were always asking questions: "How big do they get? Is it male or a female? How tall does it grow? Why is it doing that? Where does it sleep at night?" Matabula knew that Mike prided himself on his knowledge of the bush and the animals and plants in the game reserve, and he had laughed to himself as the children plagued Mike with more and more questions.

Today Mike had stopped by a large marula tree and, anticipating the children's questions, told them everything he knew about the tree -- how tall it grew, when it flowered, why the natives revered it, what medicines they made from its leaves and bark, how old it got. When he was finished there had been a short silence, and then, as Mike moved to restart the Land Rover, the girl had asked, "How long are its roots?" Matabula had not understood her rapid English, and he had turned from his seat on the hood of the lorry and simply raised a questioning eyebrow in Mike's direction. Mike translated into Shangaan in a very clipped, controlled voice, "She wants to know how long its bloody roots are!" Matabula had had to turn away to keep from laughing out loud. He had still been smiling when they came to the fork in the road, and he held up his hand for Mike to stop.

There were large clear elephant tracks crossing the trail ahead of the Rover. The children hung over the edge of the doors as he pointed them out.

"How old are the tracks, Matabula?" asked the boy. "How many were there?"

Matabula held up two fingers, then indicated the direction they had gone with a slight nod of his head. Mike picked up the radio.

"Bush, Mike."

"Go ahead, Mike."

"We've picked up two N'plovo on Tinganon Road, heading towards the river. Over."

Matabula got down from the front of the lorry and walked into the bush about fifteen feet from the vehicle. He picked up a broken branch, then bent over and examined a flattened green leaf. "Two and a half, three hours. No more," he said in Shangaan.

Mike relayed the time to Bush Lodge. "Confirmed, Mike. Dave spotted them just north of Military an hour ago. They should be at the Tree House by eleven. Will you follow? Over."

"Negative, Bush. Continuing this route. Mike out."

Matabula was still standing among the broken remains of the thorn bush, looking south along the ridge the elephants must have followed earlier that morning.

"Have there always been elephant here?" the boy asked.

Matabula heard the question coming at him from a great distance, and in the silence that followed he stood looking down the gradual slope of the sparse bush, staring as if he could pick out the winding river and the grey massive forms of the elephant.

And then, strangely, he was no longer Matabula, Shangaan tracker, working for the white man, living in a shared lodge with twelve younger men. Standing in

the bush staring at the distant ridge, he was Matabula, the boy, and his grandfather was beside him, bending over and picking up leaf and saying to him, "Two, maybe two and a quarter hours. Four of them, one big. They could be to the river by now, if that's where they are headed."

Matabula had been eleven that summer and in awe of his grandfather and the extent of the old man's knowledge. The tribe's witch doctor had told Matabula once that his grandfather was older than the oldest of them, but the old warrior would tell no one his age, not even his family. His hair was grizzled and his face deeply lined, and the scars along his crooked right leg had turned purple and white with age. Would he, Matabula, ever know as much as his grandfather, he had wondered?

Matabula looked at the leaf his grandfather held up to the light and tried to discern what made it different from other leaves, what magic was in the leaf that told his grandfather at a glance when the elephant had passed. Suddenly Matabula saw a movement among the brush slightly to his left, but before he could move or even shout, his grandfather had grabbed his arm and was running with him back along the trail to the tall marula tree they had passed only moments before. They were up the tree before Matabula could think about climbing it, spears in their hands, goatskin waterbags sloshing against their thighs, bare feet scraping on the rough bark. Fast behind them down the trail came the largest elephant Matabula had ever seen, his trunk raised and ears outspread, trumpeting his anger across the wide high expanse of the bush and shaking the ground as he ran.

Matabula remembered how scared he had been; he had had tears of fright in his eyes, while his grandfather had seemed calm, had even laughed at their narrow escape. Only now did he recall how the old man's hand had shaken as he had reached down to pull his grandson further up the tree to safety.

They had clung all day to the thin branches at the top of the tree as the elephant wandered about below and ripped off the lower branches one by one, munching the bark and always watching with one huge eye the natives hanging like swollen fruit among the yellowing leaves. Finally it had turned and wandered slowly off toward the river to join the others, and he and his grandfather had climbed down and gone back to the village, bypassing the elephants though it had meant many additional miles of walking. That had been so many years ago, he had almost forgotten.

The next year the government had put up the fence, the big one, and had told his people they now had their own "homeland" and could no longer roam and hunt outside the fenceline. For six generations his people had hunted the lands of the Sabi-Sand, only rarely coming upon the ragged wooden fence of some white homesteader. Even after the government had made the big park, dividing the tribe in two, his people had still been able to hunt the surrounding lands. But that was forty years ago and the land they called Gazankulu had been contained and compressed and diminished by the white man's needs. All the rivers, all the bottom land, all the forests had been taken away and the Shangaan were left with barren open bush and dust.

"Matabula! Let's go." Mike's command startled him back into the present. He turned and got back onto the front of the Land Rover and wrapped his feet around the iron support above the bumper. He looked over his shoulder but there was no tall marula tree here, only short ragged acacias and buffalo thorn.

"Matabula, were there always elephant here?" the boy asked again.

Matabula stared for a moment in the direction of the river, and without turning said to Mike, "Tell him yes, there have always been elephant in the Sabi-Sand, before his time and yours, before my time and before my grandfather's. There have always been elephant. *That* they have not changed." Then he turned his back and watched the road ahead and said nothing the rest of the morning, gesturing with his hand when they saw zebra or impala or wildebeest. The little girl had gotten so far ahead of him in her giraffe spotting that she had lost interest in the game and had pulled her canvas hat down over her face, complaining of the sun. Matabula had even been silent when they had come across the tracks of the lion, the old male, who had been ranging up along the airstrip each night for the past three months, but who left every morning before the lorries headed out and spent his day further up the ridge, across the cut line where they could not follow. For even the vast area of the Sabi-Sand was divided now, the bush contained; only the animals could roam free, back and forth across the cut lines and through the holes in the fences made by the elephant who were relentless in their wandering and who would not be stopped by the fences of men.

It had been a long day. To remember like that, so suddenly, to feel again what it was like to be young and to own the whole world, to range with the impala and kudu and wildebeest, to ignore fences -- sitting on his bed in his dusty clothes and bare feet, his black skin shiny with sweat, his eyes bloodshot from the wind and cold, Matabula felt tired and old. He would be fifty-one in the winter and the fire that burned in the younger men had gone from his body and his soul. He heard the sound of the drums and the dancing from the boma, growing louder now as the entertainment approached its climax, and suddenly he longed to go home, home to his wife, Changane, and his grandson, and the fires of Gazankulu around which the native women danced freely and with abandon.

But the American family would not be leaving for another two days. Tomorrow they would start out early in search of the four rhino last seen down on Bonsela Road. They had not seen the rhino yet, and the woman wanted to get pictures. It was important to these people that they take pictures of everything they saw, as if they would not remember without the pictures to remind them. So tomorrow they would do the rhino and perhaps on the night drive they would find the leopard or the hyena.

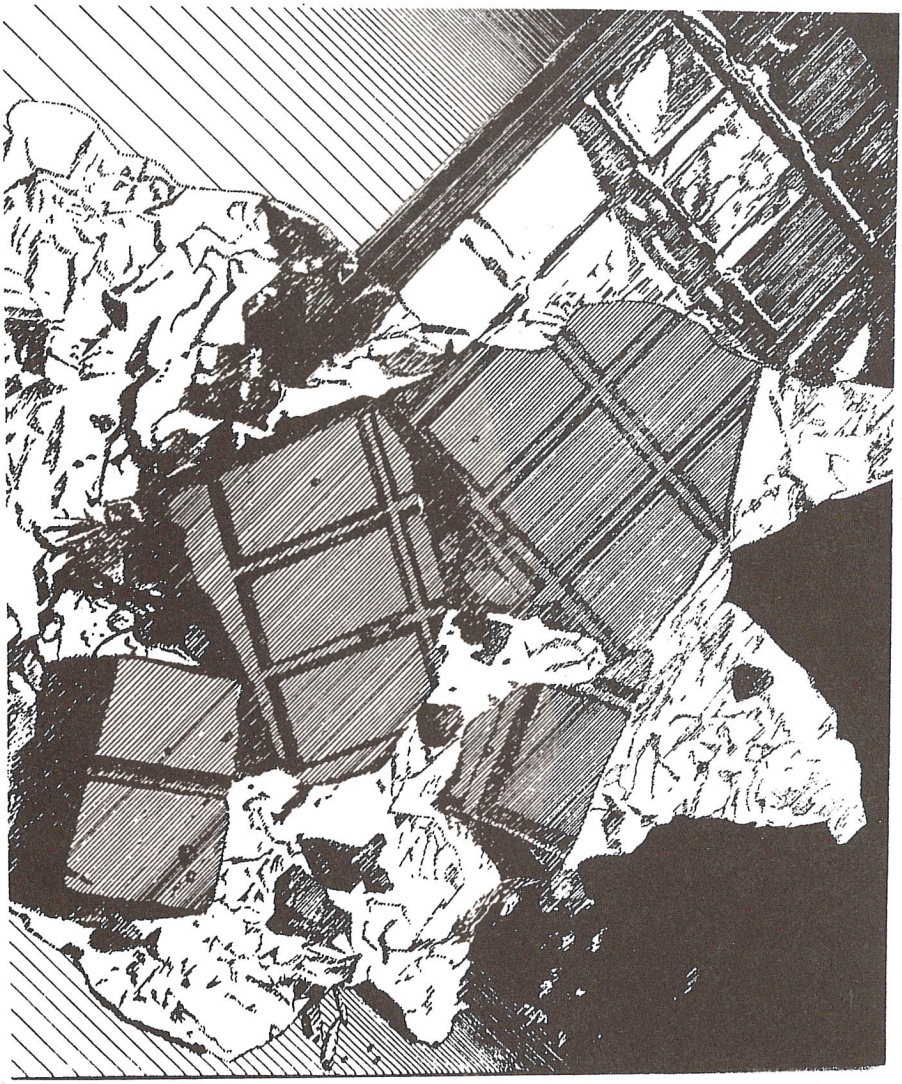
"And the next day I will ask the Baas if I can go home," Matabula thought to himself. "Mike can ask the Americans if they will take me as far as the main gate. I can see the witch doctor and Changane. Perhaps the Baas will give me leave for a week, perhaps not. I will ask anyway."

Matabula leaned forward and reached for his boots and slowly put them on. He pulled his old green sweater over his head, ran his hands through his close-cropped hair, stood up, and went out the door. He walked across the native

compound and leaned against the wall just inside the wide door of the boma. The native girls were swaying arm in arm together in a curved arc in front of the tables full of tourists, while a native boy in ceremonial dress pranced around the bonfire, kicking his legs high and raising his long spear as he shouted above the chanting of the women.

"He's too fat," Matabula thought. "In my day, only the chief would have carried all that weight. A young hunter in that shape would never..." He stopped, then smiled and said to himself, "You are getting old, Matabula. Nmako was right. You have been living in the past. Today and all the other days. Living in the past."

Matabula brushed the dust from his pants and tucked in his khaki tracker's shirt. Straightening his shoulders, he stepped inside the boma to where the women were still lined up holding hands and swaying as they sang their final song, a hunting song, one he had heard his grandfather sing years ago. Matabula put his arm around the waist of the brightly clad girl at the end of the row and without looking at her began to sing. His strong low voice carried above the boma wall and into the surrounding bush, out into the South African night, out to where the impala herds gathered in the open and the night ape jumped from tree to tree. On the far end of the airstrip, the old lion was making his accustomed round. Moving swiftly along the ridge, he slipped silently into the deeper bush, hunting.



EXPLODING CHOCOLATE

Lisa Porrett

THE STOVE

by Maryann Bennert

Fall, winter and late into spring the stove dominated our lives as well as the living room in which it stood, claiming one entire wall for itself. We could not go away for twenty-four hours without having to rebuild a fire in the stove when we returned. If it was bitterly cold in the house, Mom would turn the oven on in the electric range in the kitchen. We would gather around the open door to absorb the heat still dressed in our coats, hats, gloves and boots until the "Warm Morning" started to give off heat, and we could shed our outer wraps.

Waking up to a cold house was an everyday occurrence for my mother when I was growing up. The rooms upstairs were especially cold. Some sub-zero mornings I could see my breath as I exhaled from under the big soft goose feather quilt Mom had made, testing the air to see whether or not I wanted to get up. The floors were icy cold, even through the feet of my pajamas. Our "Warm Morning" stove was usually just that -- warm. Mom would shake the grates to get the ashes out and expose the glowing embers before adding coal to fuel the fire. Once the fire started burning the newly added fuel, it wasn't long before it was warm in the living room, and Mom would wake me. Many mornings I dressed standing between the wall and the back of the stove to stay warm.

Mom was always the fire builder; Dad could never get a fire going. It would smoke and choke all of us, as well as itself. The stove would fill up with heavy gray black smoke and would smother the flames as it rolled over and above the hot coals. Dad would stick a poker (a long metal rod) into the grates at the bottom of the fire box to give the fire oxygen; then the stove would erupt with a sneeze-like explosion, causing soot to fly everywhere. That's why Mom was the fire builder! Dad kept the fire going all day while Mom was at work and I was in school, but as soon as Mom got home, she took over tending to the stove.

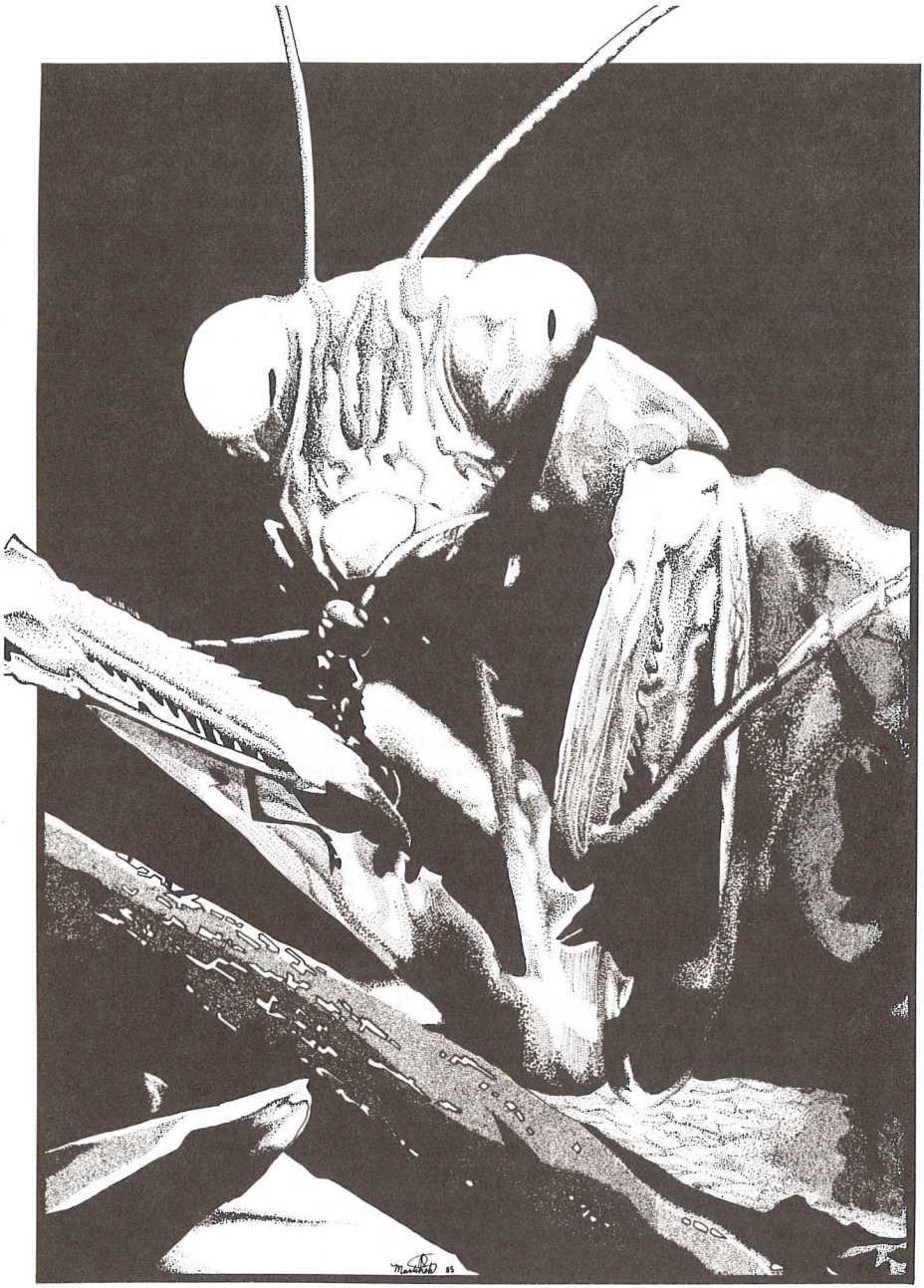
The coal scuttle with its little shovel stood off to one side of the big, round, black stove, always ready to give of itself to keep us warm. I was responsible for filling the scuttle after school from the coal pile in the backyard. We didn't have a coal bin in the house so a tarpaulin was stretched over the pile to help keep the rain and snow off the coal. Wet coal doesn't like to burn and snaps and sputters as the flames lick at it. Snow-covered or extremely wet coal could extinguish a struggling fire. If it was rainy or snowy, I had to take extra coal into the house so it would be dry when it was needed. Sometimes the chunks of coal were too large to fit into the opening of the stove and had to be broken into smaller pieces. When I found a lump that was too big, I'd pick up anotherpiece of coal and drop it against the large one until the larger one was reduced to a size the stove would accept. My mother used a sledgehammer to break the large lumps until I grew big enough to

swing the sledge; then I too broke the coals that way -- if I remembered to take the sledgehammer out to the coal pile with me.

Heat from a coal stove is a different kind of heat than the heat from a coal furnace. It's friendlier! A furnace is usually in a basement and out of sight as it does its job of heating the house. A furnace has several pipes that lead to the different rooms as it delivers its heat evenly throughout the house. The outside of a furnace is cool enough to touch while a fire roars inside the fire box. A stove heats mainly the room it is in, and the outside of the stove can give a nasty burn to anyone touching it. A stove gives warmth and warm sounds. The tea kettle hums a merry tune as the water boils inside giving humidity to the room. The fire's glow adds color to the walls and floor, making the room cozy. The coals sizzle and snap as they are consumed by flames and settle to the bottom of the fire box as ashes with a belch-like sound.

The ashes had several uses. They were spread over garden areas to help condition the soil. Large buckets of ashes were carried in the trunks of cars for extra weight in the winter. They became useful when a car got stuck in the snow or couldn't get traction on icy roads. Tossing a handful or two of ashes under the spinning tires helped to give the roughness needed to get moving again. Ashes were used to fill ruts in the driveways when the spring thaw came. They helped to make the ground solid and filled the holes left from the long winter.

The living room looked unfamiliar and no amount of furniture or re-arranging could fill the void the absent stove created when it was taken out for the summer. The stove and stovepipes were taken out-of-doors to be cleaned and painted with a black paint made especially for coal stoves. After the stove and pipes were dry and shining, we carried them back into the house and stored them under the stairway. As the cold weather returned, the stove was welcomed like an old friend, as it filled the living room with warmth and warm sounds once again.



MANTIS
Scott Martinek

DUET

Second Place Honors

by Roberta Lueth

The early September sunlight filtered down through the leaves of the large maple trees and the leaded glass design in the tall narrow window, making a long shaft of yellow on the patterned rug where two women knelt, pinning up the hem of an old-fashioned wedding gown. The older of the two women was grey-haired and stout, the younger, slim and dark, but something in the way they both held their necks, something fragile in their white hands holding the hem delicately between thumb and forefinger, bound them together so that even a stranger would recognize at a glance that they were mother and daughter. They were silent, moving slowly around the dressmaker's form, pins in their mouths, folding, creasing, pinning, looking up occasionally to check that the delicate ivory-colored fabric fell perfectly to the floor. A long row of covered buttons descended from the top of the high neck to the bottom of the deep "v" in the back of the dress, each button held securely by a loop of ivory silk.

Louise Cambridge took the last of the pins out of her mouth and stuck them one by one into the red pincushion attached to her ample bosom. She glanced out of the window which faced the street where she could see a small child of about four pushing a large doll carriage along the narrow sidewalk. The child had on a short pink dress covered by a baggy red sweater. The carriage was made of wood with a vinyl top, wire wheels and chrome fittings. Painted grey, it had red pinstriping which ended in fancy swirls where the long curved handlebar attached to the frame beneath the wood. The top of the bar came up nearly to the child's shoulders.

"That's got to be the tenth time Jenny's gone by this morning," said Louise.

Madeleine looked up. "Oh, dear," she said. "I completely forgot. She's waiting for me." She stood up and helped her mother to her feet. Leaning over, she picked up several loose pins from the faded carpet, straightened back up, and stuck them gently into her mother's pincushion. The two women stood back and admired the dress.

"It's hard to believe I was ever that slim, Maddy," said Louise "Just look at me now." Madeleine gave her mother a hug and laughed. "You're still lovely, Mother. And you must have looked simply beautiful in this dress."

Louise smiled. "Well, dear, your father certainly thought so. That's all that mattered to me."

The women walked around the dress, pulling out tucks and draping the long skirt evenly around the mannequin. As they stood together in the light admiring their handiwork, they saw the little girl watching them from just outside the front window, her doll carriage pulled up onto the grass behind her. Madeleine smiled

and beckoned to the child, who vanished from sight. They could hear her pulling the large carriage up the steps onto the wooden porch.

"I wonder if Carolyn knows she's over here," said Louise. Glancing out the parlor's side window, she could see a tall man in rough tan coveralls and a large-brimmed felt hat working on the side of the white house next door. He was standing on a stepladder, nailing loose clapboards one by one, taking the nails from between his lips and hammering them in expertly.

"Jenson's there. He can see her," she said to her daughter. "I guess it's all right."

The front doorbell rang once, then twice. Madeleine went into the front hallway. She pulled aside the voile curtain covering the glass panel in the door and looked out at a small child who had her back to the door and who was leaning over the doll carriage. The little girl turned and rang the bell again. She smiled when she saw Madeleine peeking out from behind the curtain. She pressed her face hard against the outside of the glass, her short straight brown hair framing her oval face, blue eyes stretched wide. Madeleine opened the door and the little girl fell in over the threshold, landing on her knees on the heavy carpet covering the polished oak floor.

"Hi," she said with a grin, looking up from her kneeling position at Madeleine's feet. "It's me."

"Hello, Jennifer," said Madeleine, smiling over her shoulder at her mother who was standing in the parlor door laughing and shaking her head. "What can we do for you today, dear?"

Jennifer got up from the floor and pulled up her socks, both of which hung in loose folds around her thin ankles. Only one of them stayed up.

"I'm here for my piano lesson. You said yesterday to come back tomorrow and here I am, it's tomorrow." Jennifer leaned her head back and looked straight up at Madeleine's face. From the doorway Louise said, "Oh, Jenny, we're sorry, but we've been really busy again today. We've been working on Maddy's dress."

"The one with all the buttons? Oh, Mrs. Cambridge, can I look, is it ready?" Jenny peered around Madeleine trying to see into the parlor.

Louise hesitated. "It's all right," said Madeleine. "We're finished now. I did promise yesterday. The other things can wait just a few minutes." Looking down at Jenny, Madeleine said, "You can come in to see the dress and we'll do a little on the piano, but then Mother and I really do have to get busy. It's only a week away, you know."

"Seven days today. Next Saturday. I know. You told me." Jenny looked over her shoulder at the carriage still out on the porch. "Can I bring my carriage in? My baby's in it." Madeleine stepped out onto the porch, waving to the elderly man across the street who was trimming bushes in front of his large house. Jenny yelled over, "Hi, Mr. McKenna." Then she put her hands over her mouth.

"Oops!" she said, looking into the carraige. Madeleine looked into the carriage, too. A large doll with closed eyes and a lace bonnet on its head lay tucked under a faded pink blanket.

"I think she's still asleep," she whispered to the little girl. "Let's leave her out here, okay?" Jenny frowned and looked up at Madeleine.

"What if she wakes up? What if she fusses?" she asked.

"We'll hear her," said Madeleine. Jenny hesistated for a moment, looking from the carriage to the front door and back again. "Well, okay," she said. She pulled the vinyl top from the back to the front of the carriage. "She mustn't have the sun in her face. It makes her cry." Then Jenny turned and skipped past Madeleine into the large parlor. She stopped in front of the white dress, then edged her way carefully around it until she was looking at the back, at the long shapely back with its row of descending buttons.

"Can I count the buttons again, Maddy?" she asked. She was leaning over trying to keep her shoes from touching the hem. She began to count from the bottom up.

"What comes after twenty-nine?" she asked.

"Thirty, Jenny. There are sixty-four buttons, dear. We counted them yesterday." The little girl continued counting, but it was obvious to Louise and Madeleine that she had lost track of which buttons she had counted already and which ones she hadn't. Jenny gave up and scooted out from behind the dress, leaving a dirty footprint on the edge of the hem.

She ran over to the piano stool and turned the top with her finger, 'round and 'round, raising it slightly with each turn. When it was just right, she hopped up and pulled the back of her dress out from underneath herself, draping it neatly all around the edge of the seat. Madeleine raised her eyes to the ceiling, then said to Louise, who was going out the double doors into the dining room, "This will only take a few minutes, Mother. I'll be in to help as soon as I'm done." Her mother smiled at her and shook her head. Jenny and Madeleine watched her go until she had gotten all the way into the kitchen and had shut the door.

Madeleine stood beside Jennifer and reached over to open a large book of music. She pressed the book open and Jennifer nodded happily.

"I know this one. We played it last time."

"Yes, Jenny, we did. Can you remember what it's called?" asked Madeleine.

"A Duet for Little Hands," Jenny said proudly.

"That's very good, Jenny. Did you read that yourself or did you just remember it from last week?"

"Well... I can read the big 'A' and the 'for'," she said. "But the rest of the big words I just remember."

"Can you remember how it goes?" asked Madeleine.

For an answer, Jenny put her small fingers on the keyboard and, with the right hand only, sounded out the tune. She did the entire piece without a mistake.

"That's very good, dear."

Jenny looked up at Madeleine. "But guess what, Maddy?" she said. "I figured it out. Look." The little girl put her right hand back to where she had begun, then put her left hand up and played the same piece with both hands, the simple tune with her right hand, the accompaniment with her left. Madeleine stood behind her and smiled down at the top of her head.

"I did it just like you did, didn't I?" asked Jenny. "I watched you and copied. I did both parts, yours and mine."

"Why, Jenny, that's wonderful!" Madeleine leaned over and gave the small

shoulders a gentle squeeze. "Are you sure you don't have a secret piano at home?" she whispered in Jenny's ear. When Jenny turned to protest, Madeleine smiled and said, "I know you don't, Sweetheart. I was only teasing. Shall we play it together now or would you like to learn something new?"

"Something new," said Jenny. She jumped down from the stool, and Madeleine slipped into her place. With her right hand only, Madeleine fingered out the tune from the wedding march -- da dum ta dum, da dum ti dum. Jenny never took her eyes from the keys.

"Now, Jenny, can you play that?" Madeleine asked, moving off the stool. Jenny stood at the keyboard with her eyes shut. "Where do you want me to start it?"

"What do you mean?"

"I don't have to start it where you did," she said. "I figured it out. Listen." Still standing, Jenny began on a black key, and, feeling her way carefully from note to note, she played the wedding march exactly as Madeleine had done, with one hand only. "You see, it doesn't matter where you start, you can make it sound the same. Well, almost the same. And," she added triumphantly, "I can do it with both hands." With that, she climbed back up onto the stool and played the march with her left hand making the chords from the black keys.

"Jenny, that's just marvelous! Do you know what key you're in?"

"Key? What's that?"

"Well, you know, last week I showed you about the key of C. We start on that key in the duet, remember?"

Jenny played the first tune again starting on middle C.

"That's right. That's playing in the key of C. Now, there are other keys on the piano, and the one with all the black keys you just played is called..." Madeleine hesitated. "Well, first let's just name the different keys. This one is C, the next one is D... Do you know your alphabet, Jenny?" she asked.

"Oh, yes. A, b, c, d, e, f, g...," she sang. "H, i, j, k, l-m-n-o-p." The last five letters were run together as if they were only one word. Jenny paused.

"Okay," Madeleine interrupted. "Jenny, the keys on the piano have names just like the letters in the alphabet, only they just go a-b-c-d-e-f-g, then they start over again, a-b-c-d-e-f-g, and so on." Madeleine demonstrated this as she talked by playing the notes as she said their names.

"But what happened to the rest of the letters?" Jenny asked.

Madeleine laughed. "Why, I don't know," she said. She leaned over and looked directly at Jenny. She made an ugly face and said in a low voice, "Maybe a great big alphabet-eating monster gobbled them up!" She made motions with her hands, stuffing the imaginary letters into her mouth. Jennifer giggled with delight.

"Or," she continued, "maybe they just floated up into the air and escaped." Jenny laughed, looking around the comfortable parlor as if looking for the lost p's and r's and w's. Madeleine looked around the room also. She looked at the clock over the fireplace.

"Oh, dear, Jenny. I'm afraid we have to stop now. I really do have to go help Mother. Why don't you go home now and maybe tomorrow you can come back." Jenny looked up at Madeleine and let a pained frown cross her face for just the slightest moment. Then she smiled and got carefully down from the stool.

"Okay," she said. "Tomorrow. I'll be back tomorrow." Jenny ran to the front door, opened it herself by pulling hard on the handle and pushed it all the way to the hallway wall, being careful not to let it actually touch the wall. She stepped out onto the porch and looked at the doll in the carriage. She pushed back the vinyl top, then held the bar as she let it roll one step at a time down to the walk. She headed toward her house and when she was almost to her own front yard, turned and waved at Madeleine.

"Tomorrow," she yelled. Madeleine waved. Across the street, Lawrence McKenna turned from trimming the bushes and he also waved to Jenny. Jenson Cross had moved to the back of the house. Madeleine could hear the rhythmic pounding of his hammer. She closed the door and went back into the parlor and sighed as she leaned and wiped the dirty hem of her wedding dress against her linen skirt. She frowned at the spot.

Louise came back into the room, wiping her hands on her apron. "Did Jenny go already?" she asked. She came over to where Madeleine was still rubbing at the hem of the dress. "Oh, dear, how did that happen?"

"Jenny," said Madeleine. "She stepped on it. Oh, well. It will wash out." She dropped the hem back to the floor. Her mother walked over to the parlor window which faced the house next door. She could see Jenny sitting on her own front porch steps, rocking the doll carriage back and forth and singing to herself. Louise dropped her gaze only slightly and looked sadly at the unused garden plot between the two houses. Sensing her mother's distress, Madeleine came up beside her. Putting her arm through her mother's, she let her own eyes rest on the overgrown garden.

"I know, Mother. It isn't going to be the same next week with Father gone. I never imagined him not being here to give me away. Drew and I would never have insisted on waiting if we had known..."

"He loved his garden," her mother replied, as if she hadn't heard. "He would work in it all summer, watching the children parading up and down the sidewalk. He loved it when they stopped to talk and asked him what he was growing and how long it would take and could they have some when it was ready." She paused. "He was particularly fond of Jennifer: he said she was different, special. He joked one day, Maddy, when I asked him about that. He said, 'Well, I don't mean she's different like a rose is from the other flowers. No, I don't mean it like that.' You remember how he talked, Maddy, so slow and deliberate, with that little secret smile just at the corners of his mouth, always pretending to be serious when he really wasn't. 'I mean, she's more like a carrot. Not your everyday ordinary garden variety carrot. Oh, no. Not Jenny. She's a very special kind of carrot, Jenny is!' "

"Whatever do you think he meant?" asked Madeleine.

"Maddy, dear, I know what I think he meant, but as to knowing what your father really meant, ever -- I wouldn't want to hazard a guess." With this, her mother looked straight out the window.

"Look at that child now," she said. "Whatever is she doing?"

Jenny had pushed the doll carriage back down her own front walk and across the sidewalk and now stood with both hands on the chrome push bar. The front

wheels were on the pavement. She was standing beside a large wide maple and looking across the street and talking loudly. Her hands pushed the carriage out, then pulled it back; her head turned from side to side. She looked back over her shoulder at the house, at the upstairs window over the front purch, then back to the large heavy-rooted oak directly across from her on the other side of the road.

"She's not supposed to cross the street," said Madeleine. "Where's Carolyn?"

Louise rapped sharply on the window, but Jenny didn't seem to hear. Instead, she stood on the side of the road, her feet in the dirt where the grass was worn away, her view blocked by the maple. She gripped the carriage push bar until her knuckles turned white and twisted her head and moved her eyes frantically.

"No!" she yelled out.

"Yes!"

"No! I can't. Please. I'm not supposed to."

Suddenly Jenny pulled back on the carriage and then, with one violent push, shoved it out into the street.

"Oh, my Lord!" shouted Louise from the window. She turned and with surprising agility propelled her stout body quickly into the hallway. She threw open the front door and let it bang heavily against the wall. The door's bang was echoed out on the street by the sound of smashing, splintering wood and a screeching of tires on the pavement. Louise and Madeleine ran out of the house together.

In the center of the small lawn next door, Louise saw Jennifer. She had her fists clenched, her eyes shut tight. She was stamping her feet hard on the ground, gasping for breath -- breath that would not come -- struggling and gasping and trying to breathe. Louise saw Jenson Cross coming out at a run from the other side of the house and Lawrence McKenna moving hastily down his walk toward the road. Carolyn Cross rushed down the front porch steps, her hands covered with foamy white soapsuds which dripped down the front of her dress.

Jennifer gasped again and, forcing air into her lungs, screamed. She caught her breath and screamed; a long wail of desperation, the scream filled the neighborhood and blotted out the yelling voices and the sound of running feet. She could feel someone shaking her shoulders, shaking her hard and yelling, "Stop that, Jenny! Stop it! You're all right, you're all right. You don't have to yell. You're not hurt."

Jenny opened her eyes, still holding onto the wail, and looked into her mother's face. It was even with hers; Carolyn was holding her at arm's length and shaking her and yelling at her to stop.

Jenny stopped yelling. She looked down and saw a stream of yellow liquid running down from under her dress, running down her socks and into her shoes. Her mother looked at her in dismay. "Oh, my God. Jennifer. You're a disgrace."

Jenny started to cry. She stood stiff-legged in the middle of the green lawn, her head held stiffly on top of her slender neck, her hands pressing her dress hard into her crotch. She heard her mother say, "Jenny, look at what you've done."

Jenny shuddered and her legs felt warm and then cold. She shut her eyes tight. The last thing she heard was Louise saying, "Carolyn, stop it! Get her into the house and stop yelling at her. Carolyn!" And then Louise's large strong arms enfolded her and Jenny fainted.

Out in the street, a bright red pickup truck was turned sideways, its skid marks running in a backward line from where its wheels were now to where the carraige had been a moment ago. The doll carriage was smashed; pieces of it were scattered in the grass on both sides of the road, the wire wheels folded over, the blanket torn, the doll thrown up onto the dirt, its head crushed.

Lawrence McKenna had pulled Jenson away from the young boy who had been driving the truck. "That's enough, Jenson. There's no call for that. Jenny's all right." The boy fell to the pavement and sobbed openly, holding his stomach tightly with his arms. There were bruises on his face.

Jenson freed himself from the old man's grasp. He hauled the boy to his feet and pushed him toward the house, propelling the frightened, pleading teenager down the driveway.

"You call your old man, Sonny, and you get him up here quick, you hear?" Jenson shook him roughly, ignoring his desperate pleas. The boy was trying to keep up with Jenson's long strides, but one of his tennis shoes had come untied and he kept tripping on the dirty dragging shoelace as he stumbled and was pushed up the driveway toward the back door.

Jenny's mother had returned to the front porch and watched Louise carry Jenny through the front door of the Cambridge house. Carolyn turned and went back inside, hollering, "Billy, Billiiieee," loudly enough to be heard throughout the whole house.

The long narrow street was now quiet; people returned slowly to their homes. Up and down the street, front doors opened and closed, and the silence of the Saturday morning moved back into the neighborhood like a palpable, substantial force and hovered around the red truck, which someone had moved and parked in front of the Cambridge house.

In the cool parlor, darkened because Madeleine had pulled down the shades by their dainty, crocheted rings, Jenny lay on top of a blanket on the brown horsehair couch. Louise had placed a cold cloth on her forehead and had removed her shoes and soiled socks and was gently washing her thin legs. Jenny watched her without moving, her front teeth biting her lower lip, tears still brimming in her eyes.

"It's all right, dear. You just go right ahead and cry. It doesn't matter. It isn't important; anyone would have done the same thing. We're just glad you weren't hurt."

Madeleine stood behind her mother holding a shallow basin of water. "I'm sorry about your doll carriage, Jenny," she said. "Maybe you can get... well, I'm real sorry."

The two women spoke in soft voices. Jennifer put her head back on the embroidered pillows and let her eyes move about the room, first darting quickly from place to place, then slowly relaxing and taking in the whole room, the tassels on the large, beige lampshade, the delicate lace tablecloth, the dark mahogany

piano with its black and white keys polished and gleaming. Her eyes rested on the piano, then closed. The women were silent.

The doorbell rang sharply, but before Madeleine could move to answer it, someone opened the front door. Carolyn Cross came in and stood in the parlor door. A small boy stood behind her, pressing his face up against the back of her legs and peering between them into the room.

Jenny sat up quickly and pulled her rumpled dress down over her legs.

"It's okay, Jenny. You don't have to get up," said Louise, looking at Carolyn and the little boy. "You can stay here if you would like."

"No, Louise," said Carolyn. "Jenny can come home where she belongs now. Thank you very much for helping, but Jenny will be fine at home. I just had to get Billy out of the tub." At the mention of his name, the little boy moved out from behind his mother and stood in front of Louise. He eyed a crystal dish which held silver foil-wrapped candy on the table near the door.

Louise followed his gaze with her eyes. She smiled down and said, "Would you like a piece of candy, Billy?" He nodded his head. Then he turned and looked up at his mother, who was still standing in the doorway, her arms folded across her chest. She didn't say anything.

Louise lifted the cover of the dish. "You may take as many as you would like," she said. From the doorway, Carolyn said, "You may take one, Billy. And you may not eat it until after you have eaten all your lunch."

The little boy reached into the dish and carefully lifted one of the candies out by its blue and white paper tag. He turned and handed it reluctantly to his mother. Louise offered a piece to Jenny, who was sitting on the very edge of the couch. Jenny shook her head back and forth. Carolyn cleared her throat, and Jenny looked up quickly and said, "No, thank you, Mrs. Cambridge. I don't want any."

"Come on then, Jenny," said her mother. "Let's go."

Jenny picked up her socks and shoes and walked past her mother out onto the front porch where she stopped and stared at the red truck. There was no sign of the pieces of the doll carriage; the doll had been removed. Jenny padded in her bare feet along the sidewalk and up the steps onto her own porch. She opened the door and disappeared inside. Carolyn shut the door firmly behind them.

"Poor Jenny," said Madeleine as she walked into the kitchen to empty the basin of water and rinse the rags. Her mother followed her. "I do hope she will be all right. Sometimes I don't understand people, I really don't. Imagine yelling at a child at a moment like that. Really, Mother, I sometimes wonder about Carolyn. What would Father have said?"

Louise didn't answer but stood looking out the kitchen window across at Jennifer's house. In the narrow distance that separated the two houses, she could see Jenny in the far corner of her own kitchen, sitting on a chair with her face to the wall. Carolyn was preparing lunch, walking back and forth across the kitchen, talking as she worked. Louise couldn't hear the words even though the windows were open, but she could tell by the slump of Jenny's shoulders that they were directed at the small, dejected child. Turning quickly away, Louise asked, "What did you say, Maddy? I'm afraid I wasn't listening."

"Oh, nothing, Mother. I just feel bad for Jennifer, that's all."

"We all do, dear. We all do." The two women stood side by side at the large double sink. While Louise washed, Madeleine dried and stacked the dishes and pans left from baking earlier that morning. When they were finished, Louise took off her apron and said, "I think I'll go upstairs and lie down, Maddy." She walked back to the window and rearranged the leaves of a large plant while she looked out across the yard. The scene in the Cross' kitchen hadn't changed. Jenny remained in the corner; Carolyn paced. But now Billy was sitting in his high chair, pulling a sticky sandwich apart with his fingers and dipping each piece in a tall glass of milk.

"It might be a good idea if you went over a little later and asked Carolyn if Jenny could come back over here later. I think it might help."

"That's a good idea, Mother. I'll do just that. You go rest now and I'll finish up in the parlor." Madeleine went through the dining room where the cherrywood table was covered with wedding presents, still unopened. She could hear her mother going slowly up the stairs at the rear of the kitchen. Madeleine went into the parlor, put the shades up and crumpled the blanket into a ball. She carried it into the hallway and dropped it down the laundry chute.

Returning to the parlor, Madeleine carefully lifted the dressmaker's dummy, dress and all, and carried it into the dining room. She put it down in a corner near the bay window, then opened the top drawer in the large rosewood buffet and pulled out an old mended sheet. With a sharp snap, she shook it out and let it fall over her wedding dress like a slowly collapsing tent. She looked past the hanging ferns in the window and saw Jenny come out her front door. Jenny sat down decisively on the top porch step, put her chin into the cups of her hands and stared out across the street.

Madeleine sighed, looked at the clock and the baked goods still cooling on the buffet, and shrugged, then quickly walked through the kitchen and out the back door. She crossed the narrow strip of grass that separated her parents' house from Jenny's and stood on one side of the narrow rail fence that divided the two properties and ran close to the house just beneath the kitchen window.

Carolyn stood at the sink. Her bleached hair was done up in neat rows of curlers and covered with a transparent pink chiffon scarf, carefully knotted at the direct center of her forehead. She had on a crisp, ironed housedress with a bright floral pattern, a trim belt around her slender waist. She was scrubbing the sink and frowning to herself.

"Carolyn?" Madeleine called from beneath the window. Jenny's mother turned sharply and looked to see out the window. She could just see the top of Madeleine's head.

"Carolyn, it's Maddy. I'm going to bring Jenny over and let her play the piano. Is that all right?"

Carolyn walked over to the window and stood with her arms crossed looking out at Madeleine below her on the other side of the fence. She turned suddenly and said over her shoulder, "No, Billy. Not now. Hush, I'm talking." Then to Madeleine she said, "Oh, well, all right. I sent her out to sit on the front porch." Madeleine started to say something, then thought better of it. Instead, she just nodded and walked along the side of the house, running her hand along the

smooth rails of the fence until she got to the front yard. Jenny hadn't moved.

"Hi," Madeleine said softly. Jenny started, her body stiffened, her hands dropped to her lap. "I thought you might like to come back over and play the piano some more, Jenny. Mother and I are done for the day, it seems. Would you like to?"

Jenny gave a backward glance toward the house but didn't answer.

"It's okay, Jenny. I asked your mother. She said it's okay for a little while." Jenny stood up, put one foot down on the next step, then looked back once more. She took a deep breath, closed her eyes quickly, then opened them and turned and smiled at Madeleine.

"Okay," she said. "I'd like that." She came the rest of the way down from the porch and walked along the opposite side of the fence, matching her steps to Madeleine's. When they both reached the sidewalk where the fence ended, Jenny took Madeleine's hand and walked beside her. Neither of them looked at the red truck still parked at the side of the street.

Once inside the parlor, Jenny went immediately to the piano stool, still raised from her morning "lesson" and seated herself carefully. She played a few notes of the wedding march with one hand, then sat just staring at the music sheets in front of her. She sighed.

"You just take your time and warm up your fingers, Jenny," said Madeleine. "I want to check upstairs on Mother for a moment."

Jenny waited until she heard Madeleine reach the top of the stairs, then slipped down from the piano stool and went to the front window. She stood looking out at the red pickup truck. The old man across the street was now trimming the bushes along the side of his house. Two boys rode by on bicycles. They careened close to each other, only to veer away at the last moment, laughing. The sun bounced off the hood of the truck and was lost among the leaves and branches of the trees. Jenny pressed her hands against the window and stared, not moving.

When Louise and Madeleine came downstairs a few minutes later, Jenny had her back to them and was kneeling down, her head in her arms on the sill, crying. Louise motioned for Madeleine to leave them alone, and Madeleine slipped quietly back upstairs. Louise stood in the middle of the room watching Jenny at the window. Realizing that the child did not know she was there, she spoke softly but did not move any closer.

"Jenny," she said, "Are you all right, dear?" The little girl raised her head but did not turn around. Louise watched as the small back tensed and the little hands gripped the windowsill.

"Jenny, I know you're feeling bad about what happened to your beautiful doll carriage this morning," she continued. "Perhaps you should have been more careful. Going across the street like that, you should..."

Jenny turned to look at Louise.

"She pushed it, she did it!" Jenny cried. "I told her 'no,' we mustn't. I wasn't allowed. But she didn't listen, she never listens, she just grabbed it away from me and... and... I didn't see the truck, I couldn't stop her." Jenny stood up and her blue eyes filled with fresh tears. Then suddenly she whipped herself around and stood

facing the window and the street and the red truck. The crying stopped.

"Jenny?" Louise moved toward the window, then stopped abruptly. She was still looking at the little girl's back but in her head she was hearing the child's screams, she was hearing now what Jenny had been shouting earlier that morning as she had stood in the middle of her yard, screaming and crying and yelling and gasping for breath. In the middle of all the noise, of all the other shouting and clamor, Louise had heard, "She did it! Janey did it! It's her fault. She pushed it, she pushed it! I didn't do it. It wasn't me!"

Louise looked out beyond Jenny, into the street with its look-alike houses and quiet green lawns, its maple trees, each one shading its own patch of sidewalk, the street disappearing in both directions, the ends out of view.

She looked at Jenny's back.

"Janey?" It was a question directed more to the room than to the little girl. The child turned her whole body slowly until she was facing the old woman.

"What?" The voice was sharp, shrill.

"Janey."

"My name isn't Janey," she said angrily. "It's Jane."

Louise paused. "Jane. What happened to Jenny's doll carriage, Jane?"

"It's gone."

"I know that. What happened to it?"

"You know. You saw it."

"Yes, I did. But I want you to tell me," said Louise.

The child glanced out the side window towards her own house.

"I wanted to go across the street," she said. "I like to play over there under the big tree in the dirt. I like to sit on the big roots." She stopped and looked up at Louise with clear piercing eyes.

"Yes. Go on."

"And she was afraid, she didn't want to go, she said I couldn't take her carriage across the street, she wouldn't let me." She lowered her eyes and looked at her feet. "She's afraid of Mommy. Mommy said she couldn't go. Just this morning, I heard her say that."

Louise was silent. She watched the child closely, watched her pulling her red sweater down by pressing her hands deeply into her pockets.

"So I got it as far as the road and then she grabbed the handle and said I couldn't, she wasn't going to let me, and I yelled at her to let go and she wouldn't, so I just gave a big shove."

"And the truck, Jane? Did you see the truck?" asked Louise.

"No. I just wanted to go across the street. I didn't see the dumb truck. I was busy arguing with her. But I don't care about her stupid doll carriage anyway. I'm glad it's all smashed!"

Louise gasped. "Jenny!" she blurted out. "You know you loved your doll carriage!" The little girl in front of her shrugged her small shoulders and turned to look out of the window once more. Someone had come to take the truck away; there was a man getting into it and another one looking at the front end. The second man got in the passenger door and the truck moved slowly off down the street. The child at the window pressed her head against the warm glass and her

shoulders slumped down. She pulled her hands out of her pockets and covered her face. She began to cry.

"Jenny?" Louise moved forward and knelt beside her. With one hand, she pulled the lank brown hair from out of the child's wet face.

"Oh, Jennifer dear. I'm so sorry, so sorry." She could think of nothing else to say. She held the crying child who was trying vainly to stifle her sobs. She held Jennifer in her arms, but in Louise's head was the picture of the other child, her back straightened and defiant, her eyes cold, her voice sharp and bitter. And in her mind she could see again the scene enacted this morning at the house next door: a child arguing violently with herself, pushing and pulling, tossing her head from side to side, talking and answering and arguing, unable to see or hear anything else but herself, unable to hear the truck coming, to see it bearing down from out of the distance.

And Louise saw this same child, weeks, months, years before, creeping around the house, talking to herself, sneaking out of back doors, crawling out of windows, one moment laughing and playing happily, the next sidling around under the kitchen window, stealing things from the garden. This same child denying things, not remembering, not seeming the same from one day to the next. And her husband watching the child's antics from his garden and smiling to himself, calling her a "different kind of carrot." He had known.

Now *she* knew. Whatever was she going to do with such knowledge, such a burden of knowing? Louise looked down at the small head resting now on her shoulder. She sighed a deep sigh, pulled up from the depths of her sixty-five year old body, and the child echoed that sigh with one of her own.

"Jenny," she said, "I think perhaps you'd better go home now. Your mother will be wondering why we're keeping you so long." Jenny looked longingly around the room. "But I haven't played the piano yet, Mrs. Cambridge."

"I know, dear. Another day. We'll do it another day."

"Tomorrow?" asked Jenny in a hopeful voice.

"We'll see. Perhaps." Louise got up, leaning heavily on the sill and raised the child up by her hands. "Would you like me to walk you home, Jenny?" she asked. Jenny stared at her with a blank look, then her eyes blinked shut. When they opened, she was frowning, a sharp little frown that wrinkled her brow and pushed her lower lip out.

"No. I'm big enough to go home by myself," she said as she pulled away from Louise's hands and ran from the parlor without looking back. She opened the front door and left it open, though Louise called after her, "Don't forget to shut the door, Jenny." Louise stood in the open doorway and watched Jennifer walking toward her own house. She was fingering something in her pocket, pulling it half out, then poking it back in, and she was talking to herself.

Louise watched as Jenny stopped in the middle of the sidewalk, arguing loudly now. Suddenly she stamped her feet, pulled the secreted item from her pocket, tore the shiny wrapper off and popped it into her mouth. Then she wiped her hands on the front of her dress and reached inside the other pocket and pulled out another piece of candy. Louise watched her move down the sidewalk, leaving a trail of silver foil behind her. She closed the door and went back into the parlor.

Madeleine came down the hallway stairs. "I heard the door close, Mother. Has Jenny gone? Is she all right?"

Louise stood at the side window with her back to the room and to her daughter. With one hand she gripped the front of her dress; the other hand was pressed against the window pane.

"Yes, she's gone, Maddy. She went home."

Madeleine leaned over and wound the piano stool back to its normal height. She ran her fingers lightly over the keyboard, then picked out a few notes.

"Mother," she asked, "did you hear what Jenny was playing today, what she learned to do by herself?" Louise didn't answer.

"Mother?"

"What? When, dear?"

"Earlier today. This morning, before..."

"No," answered Louise. "I guess I wasn't listening. I was in the kitchen."

"Mother, Jenny figured out how to play in another key, on the black keys, without anyone showing her. And she can play with both hands, both of them together. She's only turned four and a half. If her parents would buy her a piano and let her practice at home, there's no telling how good she could become."

"Honey," said Louise, "a piano costs money, a lot of money. I can't see Jenson and Carolyn doing that, not when they need so many other things."

"Mother! Carolyn Cross has her own car, she bought a new couch just last month, look at the way she dresses! Surely they could find some way..."

"It's not our place to judge, Maddy. It's not our money to spend."

"But Jenny's unique! With a piano of her own and her natural talent, our little Jenny could turn out to be a concert pianist, a real virtuoso."

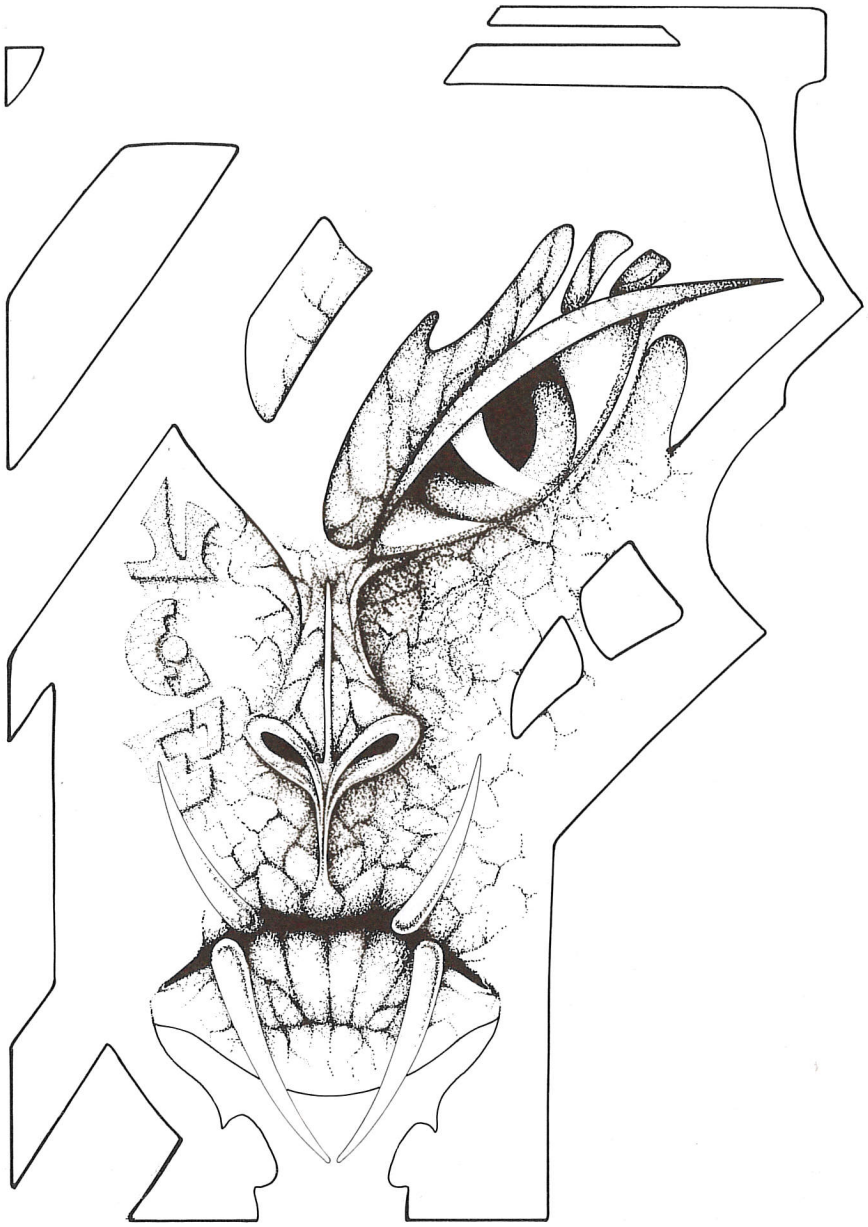
Louise sighed once more and looked away from the window at her daughter, whose eyes were gleaming with the vision of her young pupil grown up, enthralling audiences with her performance.

"Virtuoso," Louise muttered bitterly, so that Madeleine could hardly hear. "I'm afraid she already is."

Madeleine raised her eyebrows at her mother's strange remark, but Louise waved off her unspoken question with a brusque flip of her hand, as if pushing both the remark and the question away from herself, away from them both.

Louise walked across the room and stood in front of the old upright piano. She turned the pages of the sheet music without looking at it, staring beyond the music as if to pierce the intricate carving of the book rest and to view deep inside the workings of the hammers and strings and dampers. She pulled herself up sharply and slammed the cover down hard on the keys. The piano vibrated, all the strings sounding at once, in a harsh ringing that reverberated throughout the parlor and that shook the cups in the china cabinet and the tassels on the lampshade and the leaded glass in the windows.

Outside, the light filtered down through the maples onto the green lawns and, slanting in the afternoon silence, spread its pattern of light and dark across the porch of the house next door, where Jennifer sat, rocking back and forth, holding her knees and talking to herself.



TRINITY BEAST
John Rich

THE SHEPHERDESS
by R.A. White

There is something to be said,
about the silent kind of love.
Porcelain image, sitting on a dusty shelf.
Mute.

A shepherdess without a flock.
She watches sun and shadow etch their path,
perspective shifts and alters.
She measures time by arcane means.

Standing sentinel,
wanting, wishing.
Bound by the confines of her nature.

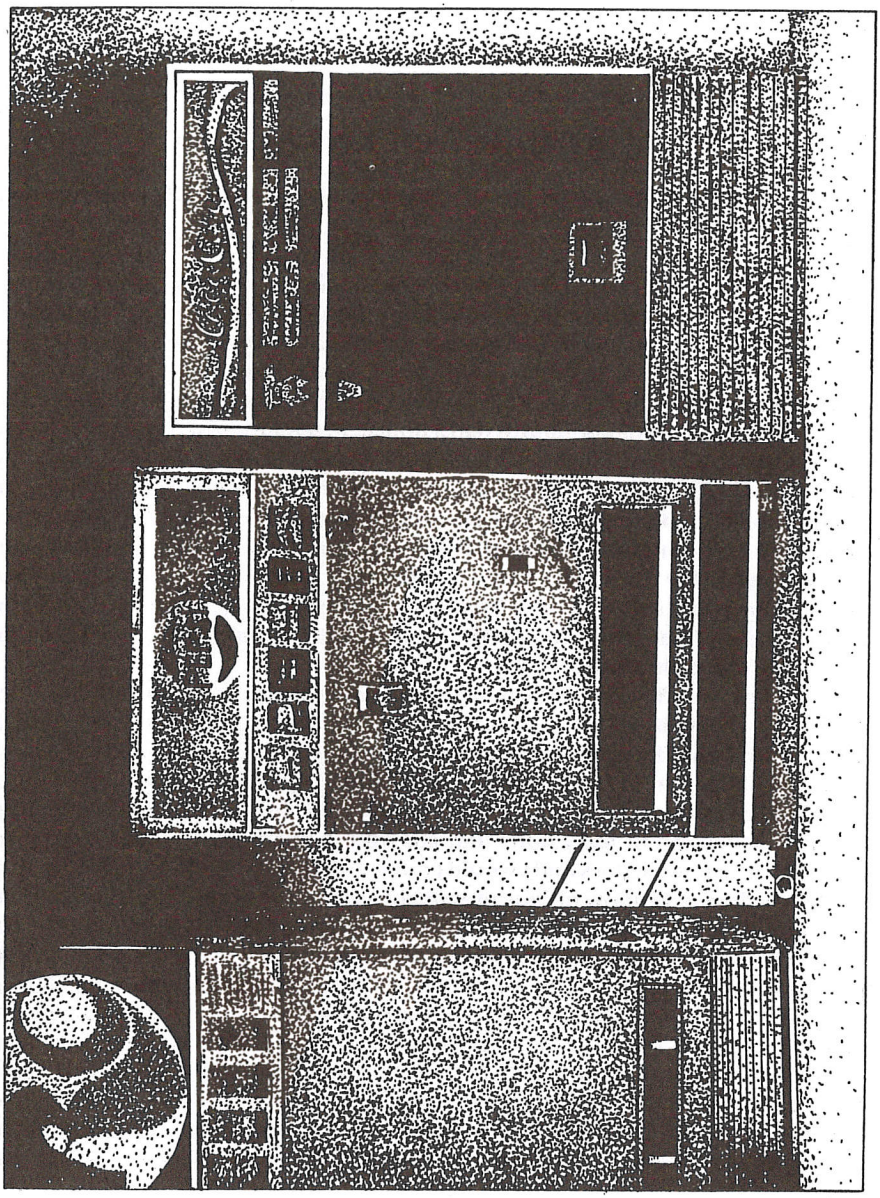
A quiet kind of love needs no refinement.
Stay constant.
Never more.
Never less.

She waits for a gentle touch,
burdened with the hateful knowledge,
aware she is but china upon a shelf.

Damning and loving the artist,
who shaped her soul from clay.

Making her his idol,
a fragile shell.

Couched in purity.
The final act of selfless love.



POP MACHINES
Chris Hager

BIG STEPS FOR LOIS

by Julie Ann Brown

(For my loving Grandma, who has dedicated her life to her family. The essay entitled "Our Son Mark" by S.I. Hayakawa inspired me to tell my story of Aunt Lois.)

When my Aunt Lois was born over fifty years ago, there wasn't much known about the causes of mental retardation. Since then, doctors are able to determine the causes in only about 15 to 20% of the cases. What we do know today is that the retarded person is able to lead a somewhat "normal" life.

My Aunt Lois was born with a cleft palate, which was one half soft and one half hard palate. The roof of her mouth had a hole in it, which caused her speech to be affected. Her tiny infant legs were terribly bowed, and she suffered from some form of brain damage. Doctors were skeptical that she would ever walk. My grandmother spent many hours on the road between Port Huron and Ann Arbor, taking Lois for numerous tests and treatments on her legs. Lois would cry and whimper softly for the duration of the ride to the hospital, for she remembered the pain she would soon endure again. Between visits, my grandma exercised the twisted limbs of her small daughter. Her firm hands rubbed and massaged the muscles to make them strong.

When Lois was five years old, mother and daughter traveled the familiar track of highway to the hospital once again. Only this time, no treatments would be given. From behind a glass wall, several doctors watched in amazement as Lois staggered and teetered behind her favorite doll buggy. She was walking.

As Lois continued to grow stronger, her love for dolls grew also. I remember the large collection of baby dolls that she kept tucked so nice and cozy in her bedroom. When my sisters and I would come to visit, Lois would smile and lead us into her bedroom to show off her precious babies. I think she felt proud of them like a mother does towards her children. Sometimes I envied Aunt Lois, for she owned more dolls than I had ever seen. One special doll caught my fancy from the first time I ever saw it. She was a beautiful porcelain lady with long, brown, curly hair and a face like an angel. Her foot-length satin gown flowed over the pillow of Lois' bed. Tempted as I was to touch its delicate face, I dared not, for I was afraid that I would break it. This lady doll reminded me of Lois, not only because she was so fragile, but because of her resemblance. My grandma has a photo of Lois as a young girl. Her natural curly hair, which is now salted with age, once lay in long brown ringlets to her waist. Like the doll, Lois does not speak like others.

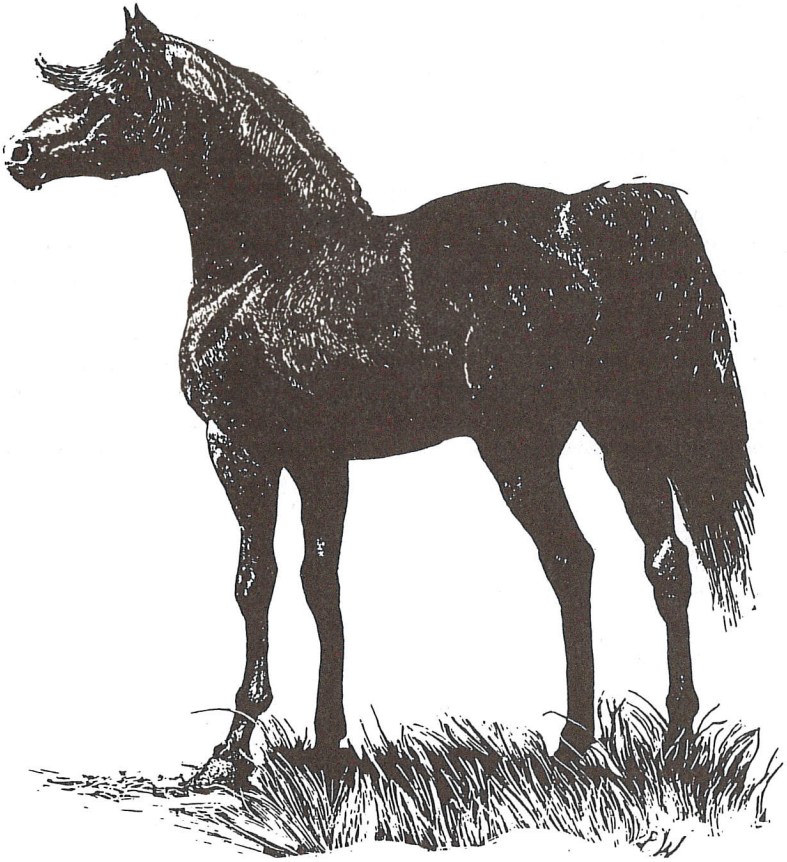
Society accepts people like my Aunt Lois today, and special schools and workshops are available where they can learn many useful skills like sewing, woodworking, cooking, and caring for themselves. Several years ago, Lois left her

life of dolls at home to go to school. Every weekday, except holidays, she hobbles aboard the special yellow bus to join her friends and share in the activities which she truly enjoys.

Lois seems to have grown up because of school. Although the dearly loved dolls remain tucked in their baby carriages and the enchanting lady still slumbers on the feather pillow, my aunt's life is changing. Beside an old, well worn, gray, stuffed chair lies a neat stack of photo albums. A carefully handled photograph rests in her elderly hands, as a slender finger extends to point out the center of the picture. It is a snapshot of her bus driver, Hank, a good looking man in a blue suit and tie, and herself in a red dotted dress. His arm gently rests around her middle, and they both look quite happy. A smile lights up Lois' soft, high cheekbones, and her eyes sparkle as she nods her head and tries to say, "Hank." Without uttering any words, I understand.

My Aunt Lois still lives with my grandparents, who are in their mid-eighties, and my grandma continues to care for all of her needs. The old farmhouse, where a generation of my father's family grew up together, remains their home. Although Lois is childish in many ways, she has come a long way since those first unsteady steps behind an old doll buggy. With God's help, I believe she will keep stepping forward.

People like my aunt are called "special" or "handicapable" today. No longer are they shut behind closed doors and made to stay home. Schools for the handicapped can be found in every state, and countless job opportunities are open for people with "special" abilities and skills. With the humanity of today, much is being done to improve the quality of life that all persons have the right to pursue.



UNTITLED
Pam Ridner

SURVIVAL

by Debbie Young

A maple tree engulfs my front yard. It looms overhead, spreading its branches like a huge multi-colored canopy of color, stretching from one end of my yard to the other. For at least one hundred years it has stood, one in a long regiment of similar trees lined up like sentinels the full length of my block. Silently, I have cursed this tree hundreds of times, threatening to have it cut down. Every spring I must rake and sweep the dense covering of buds which have fallen, followed by an ocean of messy brown wing-carrying seeds. Begrudgingly, I rake bag after bag of leaves in the fall and worry about my second-story eaves troughs packed with leaves. Hidden from passers-by, a network of roots weakens my basement walls and lift my sidewalks. But today, as I look at this tree, no longer do I see it as a time-consuming nuisance. I see much, much more.

Stretching my imagination, I visualize the young sapling, barely able to stand. Human hands must have nurtured it in its infancy to ensure its survival. Perhaps it was fertilized and protected from the bitter cold of its first winter. It may have been supported with stakes, enabling it to grow straight and tall. Eventually, however, the tree was left to its own devices. Roots firmly planted, the struggle for survival began.

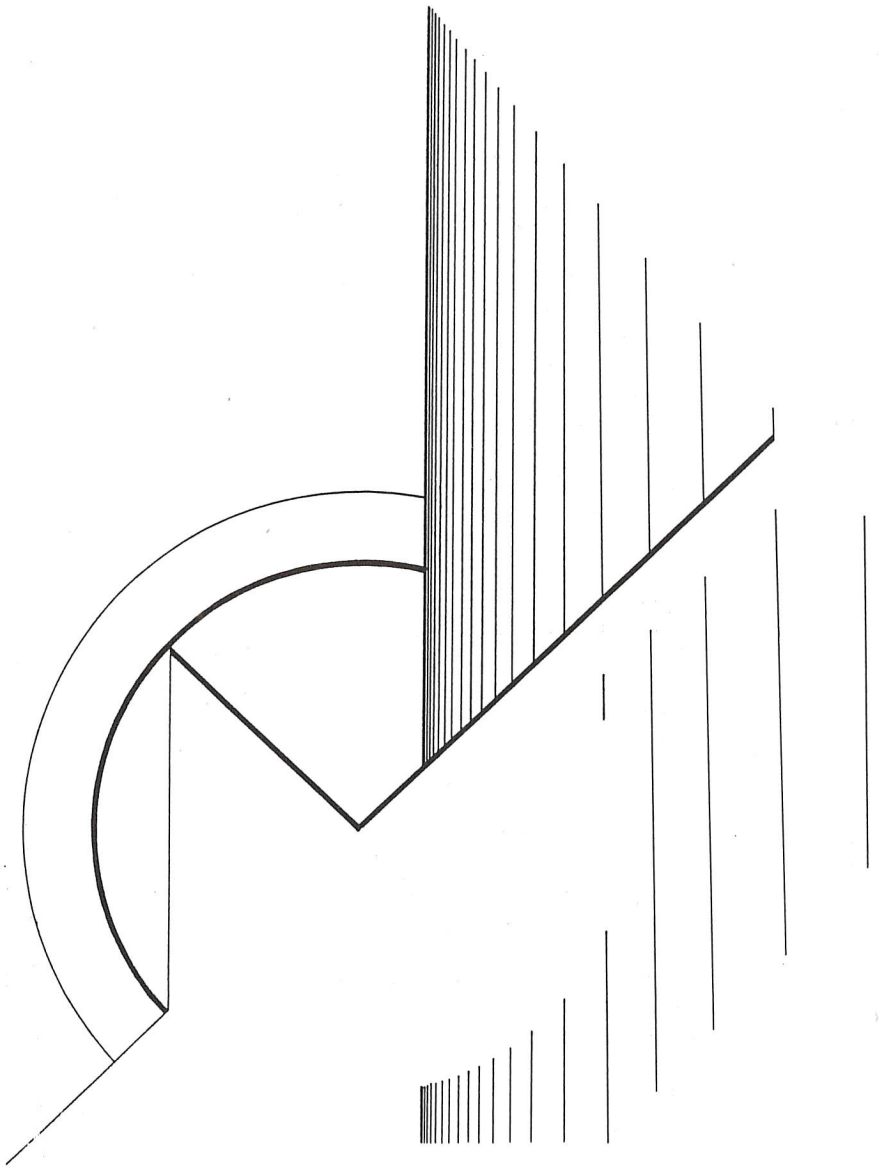
Every spring, summer, fall and winter, the tree changes, adapting itself to the approaching climate. For more than one hundred years it has repeated the same cycle, emerging only slightly different each year. Rebirth is continuous for this maple. Tender young branches sprout anew every year, inching their way upward to gather in as much life-giving sunshine as possible. Other branches, broken from the wind or heavy snow, fall to the ground. But always there is new growth. Large branches have been trimmed away, leaving ugly squared-off stumps, but the tree survives -- even as parts of it die.

As strong gusts of wind blow against the tree, I watch in amazement. Rather than fighting the wind and stubbornly remaining upright, the branches lean and sway in a rhythmic dance-like motion. Like tiny ballerina arms, the branches bow gracefully from side to side in total surrender to the forces of nature. A few leaves may have been loosened, trickling to the earth in a blur of red, yellow and orange, but otherwise, the tree is unharmed.

A heavy coat of armor wraps itself around the tree, particularly on the lower part of the trunk. The grayish-brown bark appears to be inches thick and is covered with patches of furry green moss. Neighbor children peeled off a large section of bark a few summers ago, exposing the vulnerable inner layers of the tree. It looked naked, unprotected from all kinds of infestation. I thought it would die, but it lived, in spite of the gaping ulcers in its side. Thin layers of transparent bark appeared first, gradually making the tree whole. The scars are still visible today.

As I look at this tree, one thought runs through my mind: survival. Not only has this tree outlived insurmountable odds, it is continually growing and producing new, never-been-seen-before bouquets of vivid leaves in the very midst of its struggle. Even as parts of it are brutally ripped open or die, it continues the process of living. It has not toppled from the wind or snow. It bends in compliance to these greater forces, knowing that it must. The winds and the storms will subside and the tree will, once again, settle into position.

I may be considered fanciful by some, but I see the maple tree as a living symbol of strength and hope. Like the tree, I, too, must change and adapt to the inevitable seasons of my life. Many situations are beyond my control and acceptance is the only solution. I must bend, sometimes to the point of breaking, but only temporarily. Like the branches of the tree when the storm is finished raging, I will stand upright again. As the tree continues to grow, replacing old leaves with new, so must I reshape ideas and beliefs in my growth. Yes, I have wounds still in the process of healing and scars from past hurts, but like the tree, I can live through them. Perhaps I will build walls to protect myself, as the tree produces bark after an injury. Parts of my life have been severed and will never be the same again; I thought I would not survive. What I realize today is that even though some changes are painful, the pain is not forever. Parts of me may be different than they once were - almost dead - but other parts are whole and alive. As the tree reaches upward toward the sun and its roots hungrily spread out under the earth, so must I open my arms to embrace all that this world has to give. The beauty of the tree is not in survival, it is in *living*. I do not want only to survive. No. I want to bloom!



LINE
Pheth Sayavong

MISSIONARY

First Place Honors

by Roberta Lueth

I hold in my arms a child whose small clenched
Fists are accusations.
Its liquid eyes
Reflect the mission lights like tiny stars.
Its skin lies in folds,
The creases filled with dirt.

Out of the barren, dying land across
The flat abandoned waste,
For thirty days
He's walked and kept his firstborn child alive,
Carrying it to
The rumored place of hope.

I brush away a solitary fly
Crawling in hollows
Between frail ribs
And marvel at the desperate vital strength
Of that long journey.
He seeks a miracle.

He stands at the mission door and quietly says,
"The baby's mother died."
I see her death:
I hear in my mind her weary, futile cries
Out in the desert
Under the burning sun.

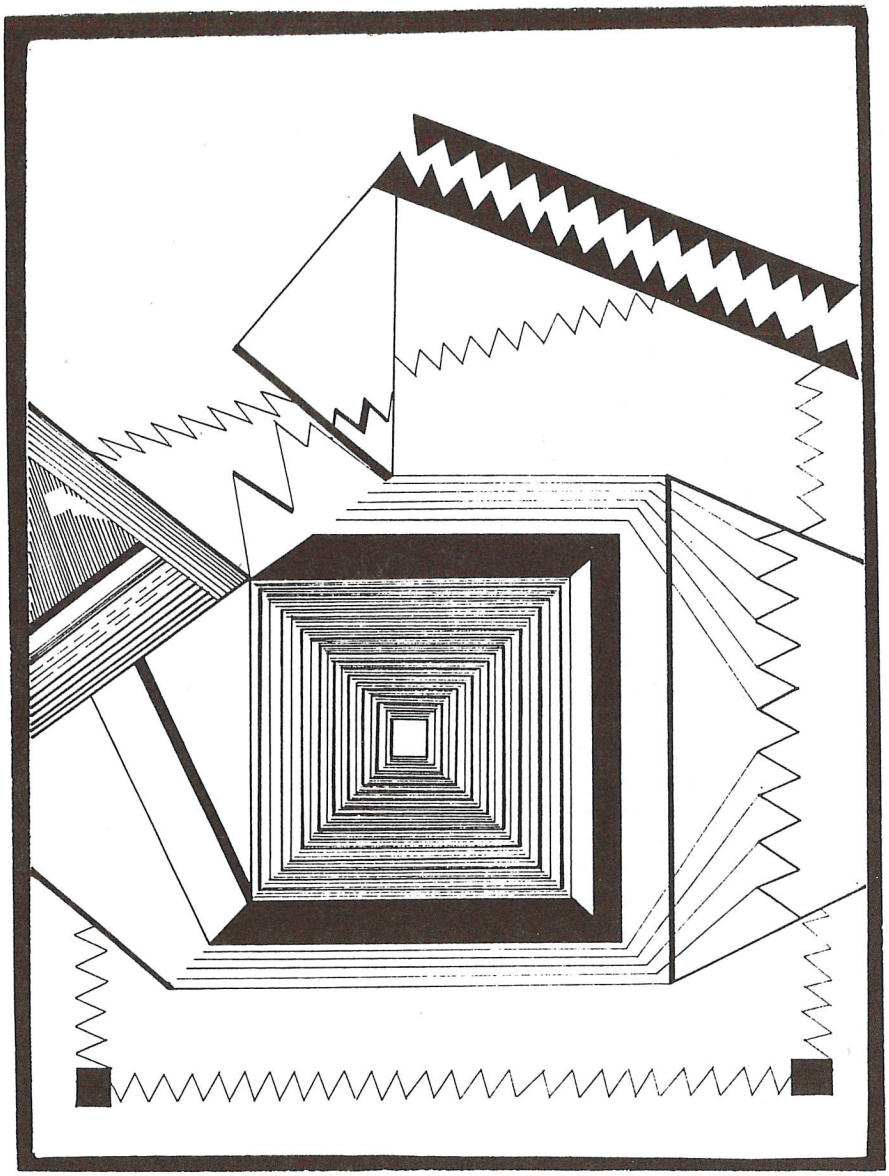
Adjusting his robes, the father turns to go
Leaving me with the child.
In the thick dust
His feet leave tracks the hot wind blows away.
He looks to the sky
For rains that do not come.

My white skin burnt, my white soul parched, I hold
The infant's fragile head.
There is no hope.
I cry to God to change this one child's fate.
In the seering heat
I do not hear His voice.

Nurtured in cloisters, cool cathedrals, my faith
Unchallenged and untried,
I heard God's call.
I saw the swollen bellies and haunted eyes
Of hungry children
And knew I had to go.

I came from the north into this drought-torn land
Believing I could help.
Where is the faith
That brought me here, that led me to this place?
There is no answer,
The yellow land lies mute.

All that I am, all I have ever been,
All I believed or dreamt
It comes to this:
I stand in a parched and dying land
And hold in my arms
A child I cannot save.



UNTITLED
Robin Kegler

IS QUALITY OF LIFE MEASURABLE?

by Rosemary Clarke

Almost everyone knows the meaning of the words "senility" and "coma." To me they meant the least desirable quality of life. That was before I began my nursing career. On my first morning of clinical duty as a student nurse, I had aspirations of performing miracles. All of my patients would be bathed, dressed, their rooms cleaned, before they would be happily awaiting lunch when I would leave for the day. I would also help my fellow students as time would allow. In fact, I thought, I may even have time to read to my patients, or take them for a ride down the hall in their wheelchairs. I was confident that the three hours I had to accomplish these few tasks would be more than enough time.

My patient assignment consisted of two patients -- in a three-bed ward. Another student was assigned to the patient in the third bed. During report we were told the pertinent facts about our patients' conditions in preparation for their care; however, there is no way of completely preparing for that first nursing experience. When I walked into the room, both of my patients appeared to be sleeping. Breakfast would be ready in less than an hour, so I decided to wake Maggie first as she only required partial assistance to get up. I turned on the light and said, "Good morning, Maggie. Would you like to get ready for breakfast?" She opened her eyes, smiled at me, and I liked her immediately.

Suddenly from behind the curtain dividing the two beds, I heard someone screaming, "Get out of here! Get out of here and leave me alone!" The student nurse assigned to that patient appeared from behind the curtain looking shocked and trembling all over. I asked if I could help. She said, "Would you please trade patients with me?" I felt sorry for her, so without thinking, I agreed. I had stepped behind Anna's curtain before I remembered why my nursing partner had been given only one patient. Anna was a total care patient with very painful rheumatoid arthritis; she would need careful handling. I would have to plan my time carefully because I now had two total care patients, both requiring a lot of time to be fed and completely cared for.

Anna looked small and helpless in that big hospital bed. She was uncovered and curled up in a contracted fetal position. All four limbs were horribly disfigured from the arthritis. She rolled her eyes up and looked at me. The look on her face defied description. I reached to touch her, and she began to scream, "Get out! Get the hell out!" She jabbed at me with the one arm that was still capable of movement. I considered trying to comfort her, but instinct told me that she would resent any action that resembled pity.

I began to talk in a calm, soft voice as I moved slowly around her bed to raise it to a comfortable working position. I prepared a basin of warm water and

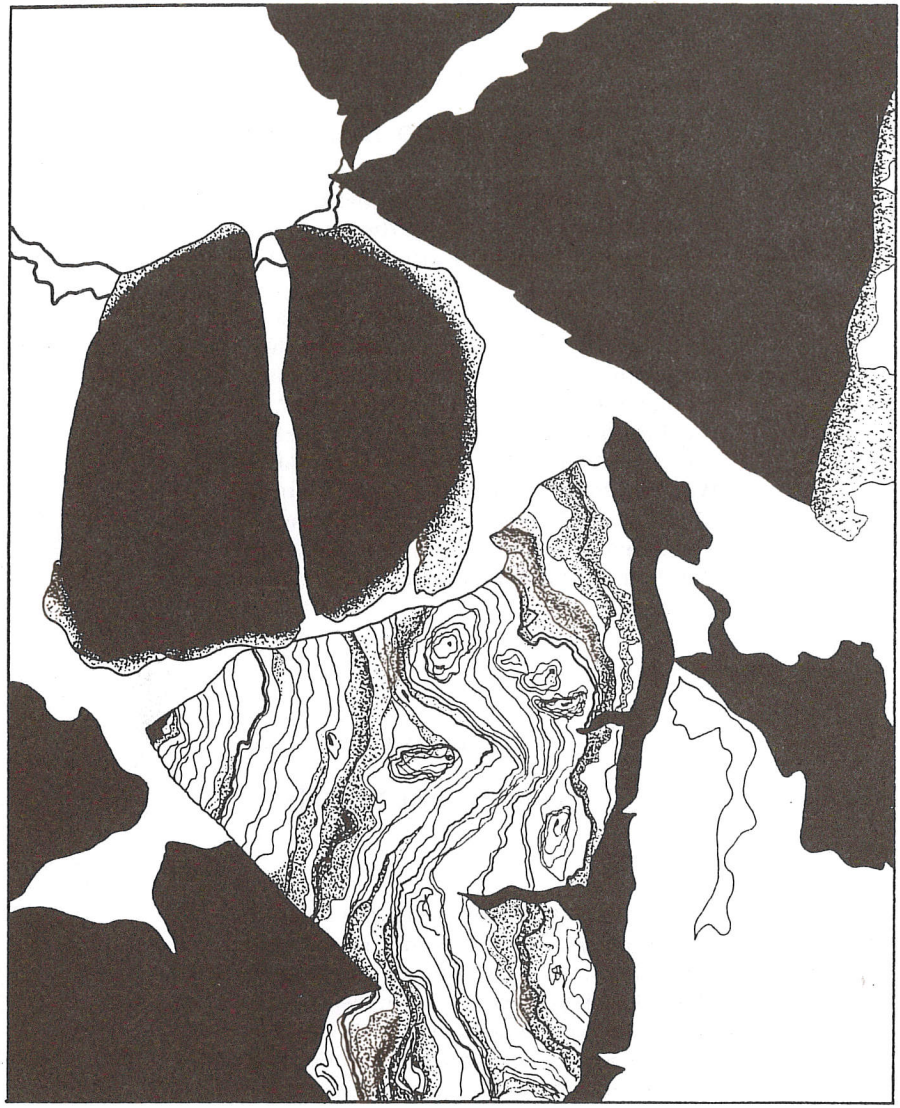
continued to talk softly. Anna would stop yelling periodically to try to hear what I was saying. I dipped a clean wash cloth into the basin of water and all at once Anna screamed at me again, "Don't you hurt me, you _____!" I turned away for a few seconds, wishing with all my heart that I could make her better. Knowing I couldn't, I decided to do the best I could to make her more comfortable. I tried not to hurt her, but her poor twisted limbs made it impossible to care for her without causing some discomfort.

I didn't perform any miracles that morning; in fact, I barely finished my work in time to make it to report on schedule.

The term "quality of life" has a new dimension for me now -- if it's measurable at all. I remember each patient as if it were yesterday. One was comatose and hopefully not suffering. Maggie was senile but seemed happy. And then there was Anna.

RESTLESS HOURS
by Alissa Francisco

The week stretched on,
constant steam-bath heat.
Time stopped,
waiting for relief.
The sky banged and flashed,
yellow and ominous,
too hot and aggravated to rain.
Hot wind picked up,
a sign of hope,
short-lived.
Like children blowing a feather,
the sky amused itself
waiting for the day to pass.



WOODLOT
Laurie Davie

RAIN

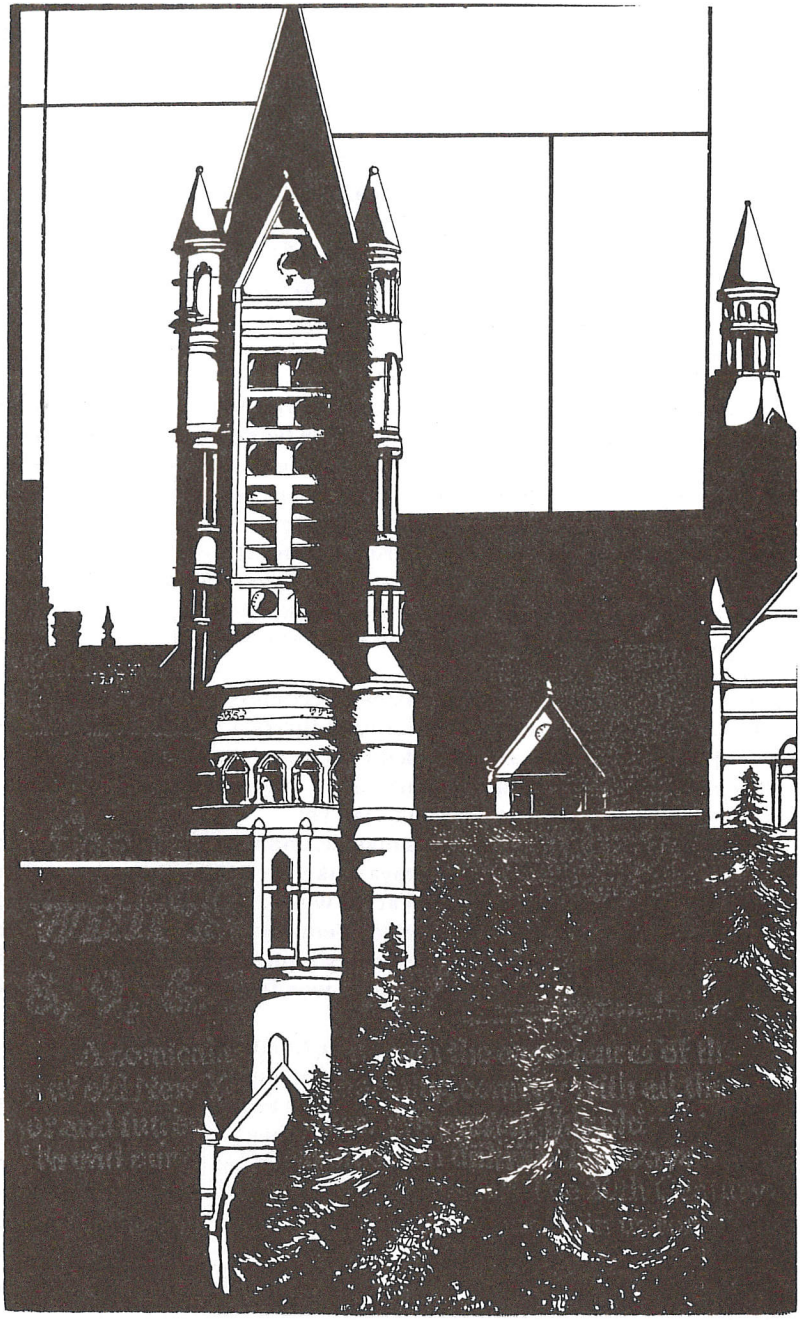
by Roberta Lueth

The roof is leaking in the upstairs hall.
Outside, the wind is driving the rain down
The chimney bricks the attic hides, and all
Along the beams. It turns the ceiling brown
And seeps onto the hallway light. The shade
Reroutes the oozing flood; it splits in two
And drips onto the carpet. Look. It's made
An ugly puddle there. What can we do?
We'll tar the flashings now to stop the flow
And hope that holds the blowing torrents out.
Who would have thought even an hour ago
The roof would need replacing? There's no doubt
The morning's cold and icy windblown rain
Will blot our bankbook with its insidious stain.

LAURA

by Roberta Lueth

I'd like to frame this morning, if I could,
The Christmas tree, the unexpected snow,
The warmth and smell of freshly burning wood,
The kids excited, seven more days to go;
The cat gone crazy, tinsel on his head,
While you, in shaving, fill the house with song.
I iron your shirts and quickly make the bed
And feed the kids, then hurry them along.
Outside, the snow drifts softly, quietly down
On meadow, horses and the winter dawn;
I stand inside the door, still in my gown
And watch you go, another morning gone.
This is my whole world — woman, mother, wife;
I stand securely centered in your life.



OLD CHURCH
Chris Ceyzyk

MY COUNTRY HOME

by Julie Ann Brown

North Street, Michigan is my home. It's not my birthplace but the place where I have lived ever since I was married eight years ago. I appreciate the quiet, homespun life of the country. "It's a little bit o' heaven on earth," someone once said, and I believe this is true of North Street.

The town called North Street dates back to the 1800's, when it was largely a Scottish community. A few families emigrated from Scotland to till the soil and live a life known to farmers. Two churches (Methodist and Baptist) and a post office make up the town buildings of today. Years ago, a one-room schoolhouse and a general store stood east of the tiny North Street post office. Many of the Scottish descendents are still living here today in their original homesteads. The only difference is that the barns have been expanded and updated, and new grain silos stand like towering pines beside the barns. Even though farming has become a hard-working, low-profit occupation, this rare breed of people continue the cycle of the land.

In the spring, tractors of various sizes and colors can be seen creeping slowly over the winter-rested earth. Long, straight furrows are carved by silver edged plows, which turn over the rich, black dirt to reveal another layer of soil. A musty smell of earth lingers in the air. Seagulls flock by the thousands to feed on grubs, and they look like snow that hasn't melted yet.

Finally, each crop is planted by its master, and the cycle of growth has begun. Warm spring showers and the sun's rays make the seeds come alive, as they poke their tender green heads up for a look at the world. Each seed brings forth its own identity. Fields of corn, soybeans, sugar beets, wheat and hay are outlined by wildflowers and small trees. Woods of every kind of tree can be seen in a far-off corner of the field. These trees keep many woodstoves fueled for the long, cold winter.

With the many farms scattered in the area, North Street looks like a patchwork quilt. Trees form the border, and each crop makes a different square.

During the heat of the summer, the crops keep sprouting higher. By July fourth, green stalks of corn are usually always knee high. Green is the prominent color, and the sweet fragrance of freshly chopped hay fills my head. On a sunny day, I love to look out my window and gaze at a whole field of soybeans waving gently in the afternoon breeze. Their yellow leaves remind me that fall is upon us.

Fall is my favorite season in the country. The corn's dry stalks turn a shade of light yellow and shimmer in the cool, crisp breeze. The excitement of harvest can be felt, as the green John Deere combine crawls through the crops like a huge grasshopper. Grain falls by the side of the road, and blackbirds flock to glean the spills. Suddenly, a semi-truck rumbles past, scaring the birds and swirling the grain like a whirlwind.

Our neighbors and friends are so cordial and open just like the vast open fields. Living in the country has a cozy atmosphere that is so warm and inviting. One thinks of "Mom and apple pie" and "Amber waves of grain." The town seems like a picture postcard because of the big, red barns, the white-steepled churches, and the herds of dairy cows, beef cattle, and horses.

On almost any sunny, windy day a string of sheets and blankets can be seen hanging on the clothesline. Baskets of apples, pears and peaches wait by the back door to be canned for use in the dead of the winter. Red baseball-sized tomatoes steam in most kitchens for making tomato juice or spaghetti sauce.

Another sight in North Street that I appreciate and look forward to every day is the painted sunrises and sunsets. The eastern sky seems to wake up the world with a reddish-pink glow. A cloudy mist blankets the fields like a covering during the cold night. Slowly, but magnificantly, the red ball of fire peeks up from its slumber. The trees from a far-off woods greet the sun for another day. The sun itself looks like a reddish-orange pumpkin, as it rises out of the trees. Dew-kissed lawns soon will dry to the touch because of the sun's morning rays. All of a sudden, the low bellow of a cow breaks the quiet spell of the morning and a west wind sends the familiar smell of manure into the open windows. As daytime passes into evening, the cycle reverses itself. The western sky, with its rainbow of colors, fades quietly with a warm "goodbye" for another day in the little country town of North Street.

FIRST LOVE

by Ginny Ellis

In "To Hell with Dying," Alice Walker portrays a special loving relationship through the childhood experiences being recalled by an adult narrator. By using first person point of view, Walker creates for the reader a feeling of growing with the child and learning how to love without prejudice or restriction. The story begins with the adult narrator stating that "Mr. Sweet was a diabetic and an alcoholic and a guitar player." To an adult, these characteristics can hold negative connotations. But as the narrator continues with the story, her childhood portrayal of Mr. Sweet all but eliminates these unfavorable qualities by showing the development of a loving relationship where an unspoken respect was mutual.

The narrator states that Mr. Sweet had an "unusual grace" to be shy with children -- so unlike an adult. In her eyes, his ability to be both "drunk and sober at the same time" made him the "ideal playmate." He was ageless, indeed, a child in her eyes. As an adult, she feels he was as weak as a child, and this created a strong bond between them -- a shared level of dependence and ability to relate on this level. Her enjoyment of Mr. Sweet is based on very simple things -- his wrinkles and his thick, white hair, which she called her "treasure." She loved the "sweet, sad, wonderful" songs made up by him and had learned many things about him through these songs. He did not have to tell her the reasons for his sadness and melancholy. By virtue of her learning these personal details, the author has heightened the story's believability. Children love to solve mysteries and come to their own conclusions through their own thought processes. And, as a child, she never questions Mr. Sweet's shortcomings because through their developing friendship she learns to accept and understand the reasons. The narrator and her brothers and sisters have replaced a lost romantic love with a type of love Mr. Sweet could reciprocate through his childlike characteristics. Once when Mr. Sweet played the guitar and cried, she held his "woolly head" in her arms and wished she were old enough to have been the woman he so loved but had lost.

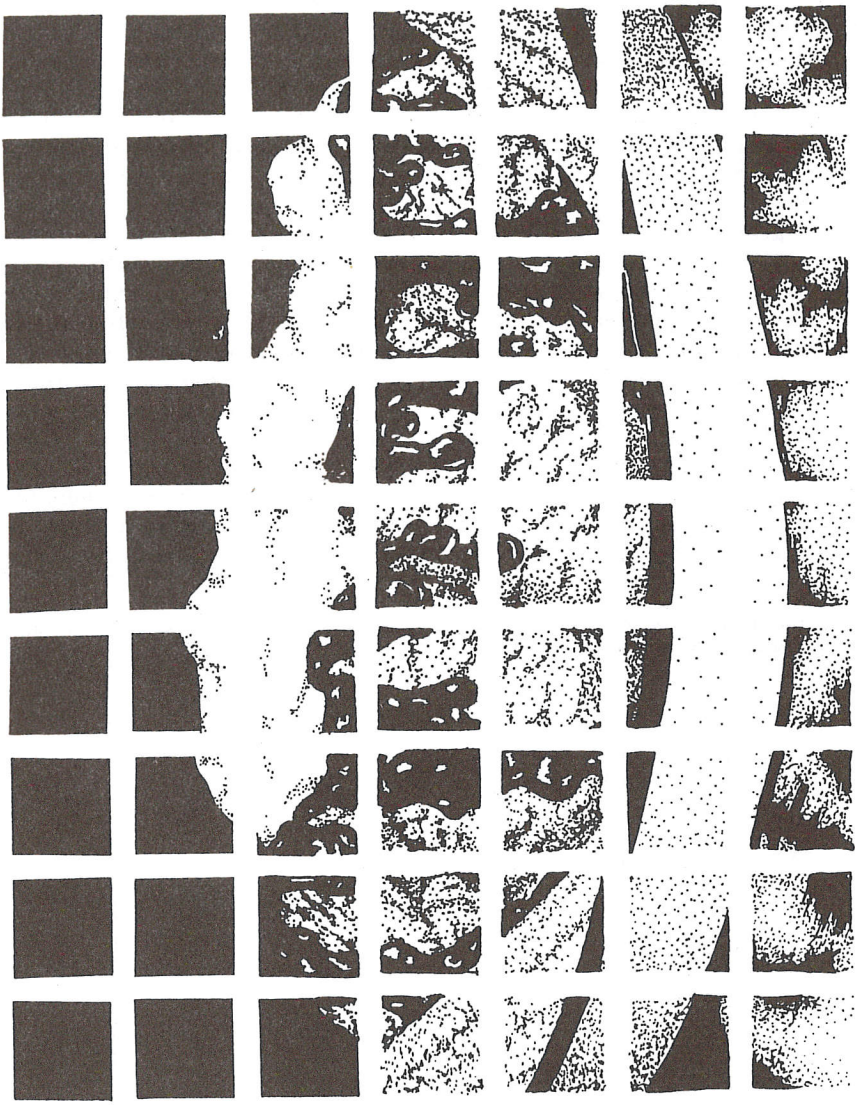
The narrator's first recollection of "reviving" Mr. Sweet was at the age of seven, although she was told she had participated many times before. Her love for Mr. Sweet was being developed long before she was aware of the situation, so the believabililty of her unquestioning, giving nature is intensified. She states that when Mr. Sweet was crying and sad, they knew they would have to revive him. Her acceptance of the fact that she was very good at reviving Mr. Sweet was born out of her unconditional love. He never literally asked the children for anything, nor they of him. As children, they understood his crying, for "we sometimes cried,

too, for no reason." He knew that they loved him, and he was made to feel free to release his emotions, just like a child.

As a child, she does not feel she is doing anything special in these "revivals." Children have few inhibitions and know no prejudice. It is only as adulthood approaches that fears and prejudices begin to take control. She thought nothing of triumphing over death -- even though Mr. Sweet's "deaths" were emotional and not physical. The children never thought that Mr. Sweet was the only one they could revive.

As she grows older, the narrator knows that Mr. Sweet is still drinking heavily but is more "peaceful and fragile." His "deaths" have stopped also, as though he has finally accepted his fate. She begins to feel less need to worry about his health and psychological well-being but still continues to see him as often as she can. Her loyalty to him, which began in childhood, remains strong. This is shown clearly when she receives the call to come home because he is dying and does so without hesitation. It is as though Mr. Sweet were a close relative but not seen as an obligation. Out of her love, she wants to come home to "revive" him. As an adult, she realizes she cannot revive him, but the child in her wants to believe that she could. Early in the story she related that her older siblings "got the most benefit" from Mr. Sweet. In adulthood, she realizes her "benefit" came in learning how to give and love without prejudice or restriction through Mr. Sweet, her "first love."

Walker, Alice. "To Hell With Dying,, in Interpreting Literature, 7th Edition, edited by Knickerbocker, Reninger, Bratton, Leggett. New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1985, pp. 282-286.



GRID SUNDAY
Carol Mahaffy

BLIND

Second Place Honors

by Scott A. Klein

We rode into life
Like a kitecarrying March wind
Howling down mountains
Whistling through alleys
Singing praises beneath our breaths
To forever's day.

We rode into life
Not knowing, not caring to see.
We're red-eyed, minds wrung
And wrought and wired slow
Beneath streetlight suns, beacons,
Pulsing neon signals.

We rode into life
Deaf to all but mundane music
Asphalt cooling, grass
dewing, men booing...
Actors on a dirt stage pray,
Ask for the curtain.

We rode into life blind.

We rode into life
A prairie fire raging
Past windows and dreams
Broken by vandals.
Innocence and houses
Looted by thankless thieves.
Hope, heroin hustled
By handsome heroes.

Pride and the rent check
Stolen by slum lords.
Dignity and death
Dealt by young drugged punks.

We rode into life blind.

We rode into life
Like a prairie fire smoldering
Past dirty children
In street corner jungles of junk
Playing. Boys singing blues to
Belts around their arms and swaying.

We rode into life
Like a prairie fire growing.
Momma's cooking beans and rice
And water praying to black men
Smoking cigarettes, spitting
On tanned and tatooed young men.

We rode into life
Like a prairie fire running
Past young girls holding babies
And their welfare checks tightly,
And hundred dollar winter
Rusted red Oldsmobiles rolling.

We rode into life
Daring to have expectations.

UNTITLED
Ron Green

TOMORROW NEVER COMES

Second Place Honors

by Colleen Baron

The Big "C" - CANCER is a disease so devastating that we dislike talking or even thinking about it. For many of us, it's more frightening than the nuclear bombs. It can't hit me. If I ignore it, I won't contract it. Like ostriches, we bury our heads in the sand. After all, such a catastrophic disease only hits the other person.

The American Cancer Society diligently has labored to educate us about the importance of early detection and diagnosis and has instructed us to heed the appearance of known warning signals. We have an excellent chance for a 100% cure, if cancer is found in its initial stages. Unfortunately, we too often ignore the early symptoms and go blithely about our business, refusing to acknowledge the fact that this disease can touch our lives.

A young couple I know were very much in love and so happy working and struggling to build a good life for themselves and their children. Their income was at a poverty level figure, but it never occurred to them that they were poor. Money was no more scarce for them than anyone else they knew. It was no big deal. They viewed their lives as greatly blessed and considered themselves wealthy. They shared ownership of their home with the bank, the husband had a job, and they always had enough to eat. Life was beautiful and bountiful.

However, there was one big flaw in their lifestyle. They weren't enjoying the todays as much as they could have, because they were too preoccupied with tomorrow. If they worked hard enough together, things would get better. Then, they could start living fully. Someday they would be able to take a trip, to go to a movie, to celebrate a special occasion in a sit-down restaurant that used real tablecloths. Everything would happen next month, next year, someday. But, the tomorrow they were working and waiting for never came. There was always one minor crisis after another. For twelve years, they repeatedly postponed the realizations of dreams. They had each other and faith in the future. That was all that mattered - at the time.

They were in their early thirties when disaster struck. Symptoms that had appeared intermittently and were dismissed as just nerves became severe. This time, they couldn't be brushed off. The young wife saw her doctor and was hospitalized immediately. Specialists were called in, tests and x-rays ordered and medication started at once. X-rays were repeated a second time. Panic set in. Have they found something? What was it? Growths in the colon were verified. The specter of cancer reared its ugly head. Were the growths malignant? What was her prognosis? Was it too late? She thought about how long she'd ignored the early warning signs. She was so afraid. Surgery was scheduled for the next Monday, as

the doctor wanted to do it as soon as possible. They felt her odds were not good.

During the frightening ordeal of waiting, her husband was her main source of strength and comfort. He came to her at the hospital immediately after Mass on Sunday. As he held her close, she sensed he was at peace. She drew from his soul and his calmness spread throughout her body with a warmth she'd never felt before.

"At Mass, this morning, God let me know that you're going to be o.k. He spoke to my heart," he whispered.

"I know," she said. "I'm not afraid anymore."

That afternoon her children were allowed to come in to see her even though they didn't meet the hospital age requirements. It wasn't their most joyful get-together. The fear in the kids' eyes was obvious. The parents reassured them that Mom was in God's hands. She, also, had the best surgeon in town. After he fixed her up, she'd be as good as new. Best of all, she'd be home by Christmas, three weeks away. They talked about the future and all the fun they would share. The kids left her that afternoon on a happy note, gaily planning on how they were going to surprise their mother with the most beautifully decorated Christmas tree they ever had. It would be ready for her homecoming. The project helped keep their hands and minds occupied during the next two weeks, when they had to be left alone so much.

Early Monday morning, the young woman was wheeled downstairs to the operating room. All she took with her was the love of her husband and children, trust in God, an optimistic attitude and the feeling of peace her husband had shared with her. Everything went right. Surgery was successful. The biopsy revealed that the three polyps were of a type that always eventually become malignant. She was very fortunate. They were still in the benign stage. She was not going to die. She felt re-born.

Prior to her release from the hospital, her surgeon emphatically instructed her to see him every year for tests and x-rays. Because of her youth and what the doctor removed, she was now considered a high-risk candidate for colon-rectal cancer. It was impressed upon her that no matter how good she felt, she must never neglect to obey the doctor's orders.

Christmas was extra special to the little family that year. It was a celebration of life and renewal as well as a time to honor Christ's birth. They felt they'd been given a second chance, and it behooved them to re-evaluate their way of life. There was a lot of indepth discussion. Two words kept coming up in their conversation again and again - IF ONLY. If only he'd taken vacation time instead of working fifty-two weeks a year. If only they'd gone out, just the two of them, once in a while. If only they'd spent less time working and more time playing. If only they'd savored the todays instead of waiting for better tomorrows that never come.

They made a vow to each other that there would be no more IF ONLYS. Life was too precious to be wasted; todays were too valuable to be wished away for the tomorrows that don't exist. They wouldn't totally abandon planning for the future; they would just put it into proper perspective. They would plan for the

times ahead with optimistic anticipation, but not at the expense of today's happiness and enjoyment.

Fifteen years have passed since they made their joint promise and it is one that they have kept. They are still deeply in love and are working and planning together for tomorrow. But, more importantly, they are sharing life's precious moments today. They go where they want to go, do what they want to do, have what they want to have. There's still too much month at the end of the money, but they are very rich. Their wealth consists of love and sharing the gift of life with each other. They have never again given IF ONLY an opportunity to become a part of their vocabulary.

NOW

by Roberta Lueth

Where did the swallows gather and perch
before there were telephone lines?
You never see them in the trees.
Instead, they line themselves in regimental rows
across, along, beside the road
The odd one facing backards
The rest, into the autumn wind
Their backs to the south where they will fly
directly
The wind is right
When something magical tells them
It is now
swiftly, swirlingly, rising, buffeting, spiraling
Time to go.

IN APPRECIATION

Without the dedication of faculty like Frederick Reed and Edsel Rintala, **PATTERNS** could not be the fine publication it continues to be. As they leave the English Department for retirement with this issue, we gratefully acknowledge their contributions.

Mr. Reed has worked with **PATTERNS** for many of the twenty years that he has been a member of the English Department. He has been faithful in reading and evaluating the many entries submitted each year and, for several years, in seeing to it that the magazine was printed. He has shown a sincere interest in maintaining the high standards with which the magazine was founded and which it still exhibits.

Mr. Rintala came to the college twenty-three years ago and soon became a dedicated and much respected history professor. Four years ago he joined the English staff and has been an active member of the **PATTERNS** committee ever since, contributing much wisdom, good humor, and discerning judgment to committee sessions. His experience at Greenfield Village in writing and publishing before coming to the college added much to the committee's work.

Both these gentlemen, each in his own way, will be missed by their colleagues working on **PATTERNS.** For each is wished a long and happy retirement.

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Richard Colwell
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Susanna Defever
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Production

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IN MEMORY

BESSIE I. MUELLER

With the death of Bessie Mueller in March of 1986, the Friends of the Arts and **PATTERNS** magazine lost a faithful supporter. Although many tributes have been written about this fine citizen of our community, no memoriam could be more deeply felt than that expressed by her friends at St. Clair County Community College.

Mrs. Mueller was a lady of many interests who knew that students' success meant the success of the community in which they reside. She saw the arts and the humanities as those areas which bring great depth to the meaning of a liberal education and lent her support to the highest ideals of St. Clair County Community College.

Several years ago, when the financial picture was bleak and the survival of **PATTERNS** was in serious doubt, it was Mrs. Mueller who unselfishly gave the funds which insured that the publication would not cease that year and who faithfully continued to support its publication each year thereafter. Through her inspiration, many have given their support to the arts at St. Clair County Community College through the Friends of the Arts. In addition to **PATTERNS** students are inspired to showcase their many-faceted creative talents in music, arts, and theater.

A keen sense of loss is felt with the passing of Bessie Mueller. The indelible imprint left by her many humanitarian and philanthropic endeavors remains an inspiration to us all.

FRIENDS OF THE ARTS

With deep appreciation for their support of the arts and their belief in artistic expression and its importance in education, we present to our readers, and invite them to join, our distinguished donors, patrons and friends.

For the sixth year their donations have provided the means of continuing this publication. Two years ago the concept of Friends of the Arts expanded and now includes supporting benefactors for the total arts program at St. Clair County Community College, the ARTS ALIVE! focus that promotes art, literature, theater, film, and music in many activities at the college, in the city, and throughout the county. With the generous contributions of Chuck and Betty Muer, the second annual highly successful Friends of the Arts' Brunch was held at the River Crab in March, 1986.

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